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INDIA WITHOUT MISREPRESENTATION—BOOK 3

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF CASTE

by

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जोधपुर विश्वविद्यालय ग्रन्थालय

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PREFACE

It has become impossible to think of India except in terms of caste. The word caste is derived from the French 'caste', breed. The Indian equivalent of caste being 'Jati', the Anglo-Saxon word 'brood' might have expressed the sense better. The parentage determines the brood, but breed is the result of bringing up or training. In this sense the four castes, the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra are the result of breeding, while the three thousand and more Jatis that are found in India are concomitant with birth. A clear grasp of this difference between caste and Jati is most essential to understand social problems in India.

The sub-divisions, the Brahmana, Kshatriya Vaishya and Sudra are according to profession. The people one encounters in the street are Malaviyas, Kashmiris, Ayers, Kayasthas, Naidus, Nairs, Koris, Tottis or any other constituents of the three thousand and odd Jatis. If a soldier is taken for a Kshatriya, it may be a mistake, for there are many Sudras among the soldiers. Likewise if all servants are taken for Sudras, it may equally be a mistake, for there are servants among the Brahmanas. This is not due to any social reform or economic depression, it has always been so.

The professions bring people together, but Jati keeps them apart. Why is it ? This cannot be answered without a clear understanding of the origin and development of caste. An attempt is

made here to throw some light on the subject. Caste-integration is the aim of all right thinking individuals. But no satisfactory solution is possible unless the malady is properly diagnosed and adequate remedies are resorted to.

My grateful thanks are due to Dr. David Rubin of Columbia University for reading through the draft and to Sri Bishambhar Nath Pande, Assistant Director of the Centre of Indology, Allahabad for correcting the proofs.

5th December, 1958.
18/A Queens Road,
Allahabad.

G. K. Pillai

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CHAPTER I

HOW CASTE IS EXPLAINED

There are two current views on caste, for clarity one may be called the western or historian's view, and the other the eastern or Brahmana view. The western view is based on Aryan invasion and the consequent social suppression and enslavement of the native population. The eastern view is based on divine sanctions. Both are based on internal evidences from the Vedas and the post-Vedic literature.

The Brahmana way of explaining caste is based on a single hymn known as Purusha Sukta and the interpretation of it as is given in Manu-smriti. The historian's way of its explanation is based on some hymns in the Rig Veda in which the Aryans are stated to have been helped by their gods in overcoming the Dasyu or Dasa tribes and their leaders. The Aryans in these hymns are supposed to be the Aryan invaders and the Dasyus are presumed to be the original inhabitants of India. Though none of these hymns contain any evidence to show that the Aryans referred to were foreigners, the western scholars have suggested for the first time that they were foreigners; and a great majority of Indians have taken it as gospel truth. As it is shown in Book 1 of this series that there was no Aryan invasion and the ancestry of the hymn-makers of the Rig Veda as well as that of the so-called Aryan conquerors can

be traced to India, the nature of the enemies or the Dasyus they defeated may further be studied.

Rig Vedic hymn RV : I. 138 states that god Indra helped the Aryan worshippers to victory against the Dasyus. This is repeated in many a hymn. In the same breath it is stated that Indra secured victory for the Aryans against Vritra. Vritra as admitted by all was not an enemy in human form, but only rain-bearing clouds. The context cannot make one wonder whether the Dasyus were the same type of enemies as Vritra. There are passages which confirm this suspicion. RV : I. 18 says that the Asvins blasted away the Dasyus with trumpet to give "far-spreading light unto the Arya." If the Dasyus were human enemies how could the blasting of them give light to the Aryas ? If the Dasyus were dark clouds, the blasting of them may give light to the Aryas, or the worshippers of the Vedic gods.

RV : VII. 20 states that the Dasyus were killed by Indra to aid Purukutsa and "he (Indra) wrenched the head from Namuchi, the Dasa." RV : VII, 27 says that Indra slew "Sambara of the mountain, and with strange aid did succour Divodasa." RV : I. 20 says Sushana perished when the thunder fell. Other Dasyu chiefs like Chumuri and Dhuni, Indra sent to sleep, and the castles of Sambara and Pipru fell in ruins through deeds abetted by Indra. Were they enemies in human form ? Indra and Asvins were nature gods, or nature phenomena or objects deified by the Vedic Rishis. Could not the enemies enumerated here be also of a similar category ? However, Sushana

is admitted by all as a severe kind of drought, and Sambara a godling.

The Vedic Rishis, who deified many a natural phenomena and worshipped them as gods, could easily have reckoned the malignant forces of nature as godlings or demons. Droughts, epidemics and famine are even now considered as malignant spirits and to avoid their visitations, gods and goddesses are propitiated by sacrifices, prayers and fasts. The Rig Vedic Rishis were in such localities where the droughts were common, where every year the coming of the rain was anxiously awaited, and every passing cloud was closely watched to make preparations for ploughing and sowing. Even now the villagers have local names for ploughing and sowing. Hence it was natural for the Vedic poets to give appropriate and distinguishing names for the clouds and designate them as their enemies or friends. Dasyus would appear to have been darker clouds that passed over the plains and mountains, without giving them the much needed rain.

The main reason for considering Dasyus as the enemies of the Aryans was that the blasting or subduing them is stated to have given relief to the Arya chiefs. When forces of nature are mixed up with human beings, it is quite natural for such mistakes to happen. But if there are passages where no chiefs or kings are mentioned, and the fight between the beneficial forces and benign forces of nature is the only theme, then the true nature of these enemies would become apparent. However, without knowing the true aspects of

Indra, the nature of his enemies will be difficult to ascertain. Indra's birth, infancy and waxing into power, and the enemies he subdued are fully described in RV: IV. 18 by Vamadeva. This hymn may be studied in full :—

Verse 1. "This is the ancient and accepted way by
which all gods have come into existence.
Hereby could one be born though waxen mighty,
Let him not otherwise, destroy his mother.

2. Not this way I go forth ; hard is the passage.
Forth from the sides obliquely will I issue.
Much that is yet undone must I accomplish :
One must I combat and the other question".

Indra is a phenomena that occurs when the rain clouds approach. "Forth from the sides (of the rain clouds) obliquely I issue". It is from the sides or edges, the manifestation of this god takes place, where the positive or negative electricity collects and discharges. Generally the birth takes place through the centre, but Indra says :— "Not this way I go forth" ; if I come out through the centre I might destroy my mother. I have to accomplish many things ; one is that some I must question, while others I must destroy. The questioning will be seen from the repeated glow of light that appears through the outline of distant clouds, while they are approaching each other. Some I must destroy. That is when the attracted positive and negative charges clash with one another and cause rain.

3. "He bent his eye upon the dying mother ; my word I now withdraw. That way I follow.
In Tvashtar's dwelling Indra drank the Soma, a hundred worth of juice pressed from the mortar".

His intention, not to kill his mother, was not successful. For, he went to Tvashtar's dwelling. Tvashtar was the first artificer in metals, who fashioned out the weapon of Lightning for him, and there he drank the intoxicating Soma, just as a soldier takes his rum before he engages himself in a fight. Armed with lightning he became the slayer of his mother—the clouds.

4. "What strange act shall he do, he whom his mother bore for a thousand month and many autumns ?...
5. Deeming him a reproach, his mother hid him, Indra, endowed with all heroic valour.
Then up he sprang himself, assumed his vesture, and filled as soon as he was born, the earth and heaven.
6. With lively motion onward flow these waters, the holy ones, shouting as it were together.
Ask them to tell thee what the floods are saying, what gurgling rock the waters burst asunder.
7. Are they addressing him with words of welcome? Will the floods take on them the shame of Indra ?
With his great thunderbolt my son hath slaughtered Vritra, and set these rivers free to wander".

Vritra was the force that held together the waters in the clouds but when the clouds charged with opposite kinds of electricity came together, they exhibited great strokes of lightning and discharged the waters that came down with a gurgling noise. This was the act and the result of killing Vritra. The poet humorously asks the

waters :—if they by their gurgling sound welcoming Indra, or are they saying that they take Indra's shame in killing his own father and mother ? But the mother, like all mothers, excuses him :—

8. "I cast thee from me, mine thy youthful mother;
 thee mine own offspring, Kushava hath swallowed,
To him my infant, were the waters gracious, Indra,
 my son, rose up in conquering vigour.
9. Thou art mine own, O Maghavan, whom Vyansa struck
 to the ground and smote thy jaws in pieces,
But smitten though, the mastery thou wonnest, and
 with thy bolt the Dasa's head thou crushedst".

Kushava, according to Sayana, was a female demon who swallowed up Indra at his birth, and Vyansa was the father of Indra. As Indra was only a natural phenomenon, his father as well as the one who swallowed him up can only be natural phenomena. If these words are traced to Santali roots, some idea could be formed what these forces were. Had the word Kushava derived from the root 'kusau', to suck or absorb, and if Vyansa were from the root 'bian', birth or parturition, Vyansa was the one who caused the birth of Indra, and Kushava was the one who stood against the manifestation of Indra. However, Indra's victory was only partial as it has to be repeated every year and several times in the year. But though he was knocked down by his own father, whom he killed, Indra still manifested his activities by the mastery won over the Dasas or Dasyus by crushing their heads. Certainly it was not by killing the aboriginal inhabitants of India, but it was by his action in dealing with the aftermath of his

fight with Vritra. Unfortunately in the rest of this hymn the author does not give much indication about the Dasas; but he remedies this omission elsewhere. In RV : IV. 16. he says :—

"Come, Maghavan, friend of man, to aid the singer imploring thee in battle for the sunlight. Speed him with help in his inspired invokings; down strike the sorcerer, the prayerless Dasyu. Come to our home to slay the Dasyu.......For Kutsa, with thy thousand, thou at daybreak didst hurl down greedy Sushana, foe of harvest, quickly with Kutsa's friend destroy the Dasyus, and roll the chariot-wheel of Surya near us" (Verses 9, 10 & 12).

This would clearly indicate that Dasyus or Dasas were a kind of dark clouds hovering round the sky and obstructing the Sun-light. This action of Indra is confirmed by another Rishi Kutsa when he says "Indra who cast the Dasyus down beneath his feet,—him girt by Maruts (storms) we invoke to be our friend" (RV : I. 101.5). The same Rishi, Kutsa, says further :—

"He (Indra) spread the wide earth out and firmly fixed it, smote with his thunder-bolt and loosed the waters. Maghava (Indra) with his puissance struck down Ahi, rent Rauhina to death and slaughtered Vyansa. Armed with his bolt and trusting in his prowess he wandered shattering the forts of Dasas. Cast thy dart, knowing, Thunderer, at the Dasyus; increase the Arya's might and glory, Indra.

> For him who thus hath taught these human races, Maghavan bearing a fame-worthy title, Thunderer, drawing nigh to slay the Dasyus, hath given himself the name of Son of Glory".

It should be remembered though the rain is much needed, the continuance of it for a long periods will hinder all agricultural operations, hence the sage was invoking Indra to disperse the Dasyus, who still keep on pouring down the rain activated by his darts or thunder-bolts, to enable the Aryas or the cultivators to proceed with the ploughing and sowing.

Their chief in the fight against Indra was Ahi, for RV : I. 32-11 says that "Guarded by Ahi stood the thralls of Dasas, the water stayed like kine held by the robber". According to Wilson, "Vritra, sometimes named Ahi, is nothing more than the accumulation of vapours, condensed or figuratively shut up in, obstructed by, a cloud ; Indra with his thunder-bolt or atmospheric or electrical influence, divided the aggregated mass, and vent is given to the rain which then descends upon the earth". Whenever Indra killed Ahi the result was that the seven rivers were replenished with water as if it were from fountains (RV : IV. 28.1). Hence it will be apparent that the abject tribes of Dasyus were nothing but clouds, like their masters Ahi or Vritra.

It is these Dasyus, who are supposed to be the original inhabitants of India and the forefathers of the Sudras. The Dasyus were foiled and sub-

jected by Vedic gods ; hence it is presumed that the Aryans conquered and made the original inhabitants of India slaves. Then to establish this presumption post-Vedic texts were scrutinised. Lo! and behold! There were passages indicating the slavery of the Sudras. According to Aitareya Brahmana the Sudra was an 'anyasapresya', the servant of another ; 'kamotthapya', to be expelled at will ; and 'yathakamavadya', to be slain at will. The Panchavinca Brahmana says that even a prosperous and well-to-do Sudra, could not but be a servant, and his duty only washing the feet of his superiors.

All this might be true if the Sudras were slaves like the Negroes among the Europeans. But it will be interesting to see that the lot of the Vaisya, though a twice-born caste, was not in any way much better. According to the same Aitareya Brahmana, Vaisya, though he was an Aryan, was 'anyasiya bali-krt', tributary to another ; 'anyasyadya', to be lived upon by another ; 'yathakamajyeyah', to be oppressed at will, and so forth. The Vaisya's lot was only in one respect better than that of the Sudra that in which he was not liable to be killed at the will of the Brahmana. Were they also the Dravidians or the aborigines, before they became Aryanised or twice-born? Anyway Sudras were to serve even the miserable Vaisya. For, Satapatha-Brahmana says that the Aryans can be a member of any of the three upper classes, namely, the Brahmana, Kshatriya, and Vaisya, but the Sudra's duty was to serve them all. Anyway Panchavinca Brahmana shows that untouchability was not

in existence when it was written ; if it were so, the washing of the feet of the Brahmanas could not have been a duty of the Sudra.

This will certainly indicate a state of slavery. There were parallels in ancient Egypt and Greece, where the conquerors had the power of life and death over the slaves. Somewhat similar treatment was meted out by the Americans to their Negro slaves. But the rigours of slavery was always greater whenever a superior race first conquered an inferior one, and it has had a tendency to become less by closer contact and intermingling. The Greeks had slaves, but when they were liberated they became equal to their masters, and when the Greeks themselves became the slaves of the Romans, in their common slavery all the Greeks were equal. In America the position of the Negro slaves was as bad as that of the Sudra slaves as is depicted in the Brahmanas, but on liberation they claimed equality with their erstwhile masters ; and then there was always equality among themselves, while in slavery as well as in liberation. But the position of the Sudra slave in India does not fit in well with any of these examples. From the Smritis and Sastras it will be seen that the relation between the Brahmana master and the Sudra slave was more intimate in earlier days ; the Brahmana and Sudras lived under the same roof, the Brahmanas married Sudra women, their marriages were legal and the children from such alliances had the right of inheritance. The Brahmanas indicate a worse state of affairs than the Smritis, while the Vedas do not show any distinction bet-

ween the Brahmana and Sudra. Does it not indicate that those Brahmana texts that speak of the Sudra degradation are of a later origin?

Then it may be reasonably questioned whether these Brahamana texts were of universal application. Even such well-known works as Manu-Smriti, have had no universal application. Among the Brahmanas themselves there are millions, who are not governed by Manu-Smriti. Even in historic days, it will be seen that the Brahmanas were oppressive rulers in some localities. Could it not be possible that the Brahmana texts in which the Sudras are deprived of every human right had their origin in some such localities where they ruled supreme.

Anyway the Sudras were not everywhere. In many parts of India, they had been rulers, and slave-owners. The Buddhist literature speaks of Sudra kings. The Nanda emperors of Magadha were Sudras; and there is every reason to believe that the Mauryan and the Gupta emperors were also Sudras. Even from the post-Vedic literature, it will be seen that all Sudras were not slaves. Gautama-dharma Sutra, for instance, says that the Sudras could be merchants and exercise any trade or profession they liked.

However, the Brahmana theory of caste is not based on Aryan conquest. It is based on Vedic sanction. It is based on a single hymn known as Purusha Sukta. The hymn appears in the Rig-Veda as well as in the Atharva Veda; in the Rig Veda it is Rv: X. 20, and in the Atharva Veda

it is Av : XIX.6. Both stand in the name of one Rishi Narayana. The Atharva Vedis are generally spoken of as the borrowers from the Rig Veda. But a careful study of both versions will indicate that Atharva Vedic version presents a unity of purpose, while the Rig Vedic version confuses the issue by interchange of the order of the verses.

These are the only hymns in the Vedas which speak of four caste divisions, though the castes are mentioned severally elsewhere. The four castes are generally spoken of as Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. But the term Kshatriya does not appear in these hymns, though Rajanya, mentioned therein is often taken for Kshatriya.

In the opinion of Max Muller, the hymn Purusha Sukta is a later addition to the Vedic text. His opinion is based on internal evidence. The hymn contains words such as 'Grishma' for the hot season, and 'Vasanta' for the spring, and he considers them as foreign to Vedic vocabulary.

As Manu has taken this hymn for emphasising the caste distinctions it should be studied in full. Both the Atharva Vedic and the Rig Vedic versions are given in Appendix A.

The verses on which Manu, the author of Manava-Dharma Sastra, bases his argument for caste distinctions are Av : XIX 5 and 6, with their parallels RV : X.90.11 and 12. In the former, the author asks the question : "When they separated. Purusha in how many parts did they distribute him ? What was his face ? What were his arms ?

What are called his thighs (and) feet ?". To these questions he gives the following answer : "The Brahmana was his face ; the Rajanya became his arms ; the Vaisya his middle ; from his feet was born the Sudra".

The Rig Vedic answer though it serves the same purpose varies slightly ; "The Brahmana was his mouth ; of both his arms was the Rajanya made ; his thigh became the Vaisya ; from his feet the Sudra was made".

Manu takes the cue from the Rig Vedic version. He says, "That the human race might be multiplied, he (Brahman) caused the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya and the Sudra to proceed from his mouth, his arm, his thigh and his feet", (M-D:1.31). Even the Rig Vedic hymn Verse 11 does not speak of Brahman. It is Purusha under consideration in both the hymns. Purusha or Virat Purusha always refers to Vishnu, but not Brahma in any of the texts. According to Vishnu Purana, Purusha here stands for Vishnu. Though Vishnu and Brahma stand for supreme gods in the Vedas, there is a sharp distinction between the two. Brahma, as is shown elsewhere, was not a god of the Rig Veda.

Manu, having established the birth of the four castes from different parts of the body of Brahma, proceeds to allot their respective duties, in the words of Brahma. He says— "For the sake of preserving the universe, the being (Brahma) allotted separate duties to those who sprang respectively from his mouth, his arms, his thigh and

his feet". Then he declares that "Man is declared purer above the navel, but the self-creating power declared the purest part of him to be his mouth. Since Brahmana sprang from the most excellent part, since he was the first born, and since he possesses the Veda , he is by right the chief of the whole creation". (M-D : 1.87, 92 and 93). Thus he establishes the superiority of the Brahmanas.

Manu, however, has made use of only two verses of the Purusha Sukta, that too in establishing the superiority of the Brahmanas. What is the significance of the rest ? The hymn has apparently baffled many interpreters. They attribute all kinds of mystic significance to it. But none so far seems to have explained the significance of the Verse (i), where it is stated that Purusha covered the earth entirely and he exceeded the earth by ten fingers. If Purusha stands here for the Ultimate reality as is enunciated by Kapila, his exceeding the earth by ten fingers has no meaning. According to Kapila, Purusha is the Germ Spirit, and Prakrit is Primordial matter. Often Purusha or Virat Purusha is taken for Vishnu. In that case there is not much sense in stating that the all-pervading spirit exceeds the earth or matter by ten fingers. But where the philosophers fail, the mathematicians may come to our aid.

They may establish some relation between the ten fingers of the verse (1) and three feet of the Verse (2). Verse (2) says that with three feet he ascended the sky, a foot of him again, was here (there), Verse (3) says that three feet of him are im-

mortal in the sky. Here 'foot' and 'finger' may not be a correct rendering. Finger may stand for Angula, the unit measure of the Hindus for ages, and 'foot' may stand for a stride. In dealing with practical geometry, they always spoke of strides. In Sulva Sutra, the dimensions of Maha Vedi Altar are given in strides. What was the measurement of a stride is a matter of opinion. It can be the span of a foot, or it may be a measure by their measuring rod, Kol or Kishku, which consists of 24 Angulas ; one Angula is $\frac{3}{4}$ of an English inch. But as they measured the resultant by the same measure of measuring rod, the unit they used did not matter. Here in verse (1), to all appearance the Angula measure is mentioned ; the three steps of strides of Verse (2) should be taken in Kols.

According to Verse (4), Purusha is what is to be or what is to be derived, and verse (9), Viraj was beginning and out of Viraj came Purusha. These measurings and derivations, all sound like a geometrical proposition in the process of which something has to be derived. What is to be derived is Viraj. The Time-reckoners use Purusha in the sense of a Gnomon or peg, from the shadow of which they reckon time. The architects use it for a circle in which it is placed for determining the cardinal points. The mystics use the term Viraj or earth for a square, while they identify water by a triangle. Hence, if Viraj in this hymn means a square and Purusha a circle, the whole process therein indicated will become a geometrical problem of converting a square into a circle.

From the details given in the hymn the dimensions of both Square and the Circle can be ascertained. With three strides or with three Kols Purusha ascended the sky or the confines of Viraj or square, then there were ten Angulas left to reach the circumference. Therefore the radius of the derived Purusha or circle is 3 Kols to 10 Angulas. As this measurement commenced from the centre of the circle as well as from the centre of the square, the side of the square is 36 sq. Kols. Now as in such cases the area of the circle will have to be equal to the area of the square, by equating one against the other a value of π (Pie) or ratio of the circumference of the circle to its diameter can be obtained :

Here if R represents the Radius of the circle, $R=3$ Kols 10 Angulas$=3.415$ Kols

Area of the Circle$=\pi R^2$, where π is the ratio of the circumference over the Diameter.

And as this area should be equal to that of the Square πR^2 should be equal to : 36 Sq Kols.

Therefore $\pi=3.0847$

while the more accurate value of π that we use at the present time is : 3.14159, though we do not use more than 3.141, in the design of the high speed engines. As the Hindus in ancient days were not designers of high speed engines, the value they used should be considered for their purpose. Yet for purpose of accuracy they used better values by the selection of most suited measurement. How they selected the most suitable measurements is dealt with by the writer in his "The War of the Silpis."

Hence it has become abundantly clear that the object of the hymn was to maintain an established value of π. The Brahmanas required an established value of every day of their life. For a Brahman was required to perform the Nitya Agnis, or worship Agni daily on three altars. The Nitya Agni altars are three, namely, Ahavanya, which is a square, Grihapatya, which is a circle, and Dakhnina which is a semi-circle. As all three have to be equal in area, the construction of them or even drawing out of them on the floor cannot be accomplished without the use of the value of the root of 2. The value of the root of 2 which they used is fully described by the writer in his book, "The way of the Silpis". There he also mentioned a probable value of π ; but that was a speculation. But this hymn gives the correct value they used.

This is not the only hymn by which they maintained the value of π. The Atharva Veda hymn VII. 26 by Medhatithi is another one, by which Vishnu is stated to have covered the earth by two strides and fixed a point outside in the sky or beyond the earth to derive the radius of the circle whose area would be equal to that of the square. But unfortunately that hymn does not give any definite measure as to the overhanging portion of the circle beyond the sides of the squere. Perhaps it was one of those secrets which the master handed over to the disciples at the sacrifices. However, it will be seen that this hymn is the basis of the myth of Vaman Avatara, or Vishnu as Vaman measuring the earth by two steps and placing the third step on

the head of Maha Bali, in satisfaction of three steps promised by him.

The geometrical lesson for which the Purusha Sukta is intended does not stop with circling the process through other means. In this case, that the circle is overhanging the square by 10 Angulas may have been an empirical conclusion. How is one to prove that it is correct ? The only way open is to find by some way or other the area of the circle and to see whether it is equal to that of the square. Today it is easy to find it by means of a Planimeter. But this instrument is an invention of the present century. The ancient way was to divide the circle into small rectangular strips and to integrate the areas. This method would appear to have been used by the Chinese in ancient days. The first process in this method is to divide the circle into two, either horizontally or vertically, then into four, eight, sixteen, thirty two and so on. The smaller the strips are in width the greater will be the accuracy in integration. The Vedic Rishis, in dividing the Purusha Circle into four indicate the commencement of this process. The rest may have been communicated by the teacher to the disciples in demonstration classes. Every altar construction was a demonstration class.

The altars were constructed in brick and mortar, to prove their mathematical theories and practices. The Maha Vedi was constructed to prove the accuracy of their value given to the roots of 3,5,7, etc., while the Nitya Agnis were proving the accuracy of the root of 2, etc. The occasions for real construction were rare. But the patrons of

learning and culture encouraged them to be done on special occasions like marriage, coronations, etc. The architects checked their methods by what is known as Vastu Bali, sacrifices performed at different stages in the construction of building or planning a town.

The Vedic Rishis in the process of finding out the area of the Purusha circle, divided it into four strips, and called them A, B, C, D. Had they designated them by Ka, Kha, Ga, Gha, it might have been a handicap for those whose alphabets had no Kha, Ga, and Gha. They have been in the habit of giving well-known names in classification. The seven stars of the Great Bear were named after seven well-known Rishis. They followed the same method in naming the seven stars of the Little Bear. In classifying the houses into four groups, they called them Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. They used the same terms in classifying the land, according to the colour.

It is the name given to the four strips of a circle that have been twisted and turned to establish caste superiority by the author of Manu-Smriti.

Though the rest of the verses in the hymn have not been taken in establishing the superiority and inferiority of castes, their relative importance may be mentioned in passing. The Verses (7) and (8) stress the important points or parts of the diagram by giving them the names of gods. The statement that the Moon was born from the mind of Purusha will indicate that the circle was drawn from the centre. From his head the sky came into being, and from his feet the earth and the quarters

from his ear. This will indicate the segment of the circle above the square which they called the sky, the segment below the earth, and those on either side as the ears of Purusha. Similarly they would appear to have called the four corners of the square that protrude from the circle after the gods the Sun, Indra, Agni and Vayu. The points where the circle intersects the square are important from the construction point of view, as they enable one to secure accuracy and start work from different points at the same time.

By Verse 10, the articles for the sacrifice are specified. It says that the butter should be as fresh as the Spring, the fuel should be as dry as the Summer, and the oblations should be poured as profusely as the leaves would fall in the Autumn. And verse 11 says that the water to be used at the sacrifice should be as fresh and pure as the early rain water.

Verse 12 specifies the animals that were to be sacrificed. The general specification was that they should have teeth on both the jaws, upper and lower. Evidently old animals with worn out teeth were not considered fit for the sacrifice. They were to be horses, kine, goats and sheep. The horses were to be born horses; this may have been meant to exclude mules from the list.

Verse 13 was nothing but an assertion of the truth that none of the Ric verses or hymns would have been composed had it not been for sacrifice at which they were to be sung, neither the Sama verses showing how they were to be sung, nor

the Yajur that admonished how the sacrifices were to be performed.

Verse 14 indicates the sources from which the butter ghee for roasting has to be obtained. If it were only for the purpose of throwing on the fire as the priests are doing now, any fat would have been sufficient. But as the roasted meat was for the purpose of eating, the butter had to be good; hence it was specified that it should be obtained from the forest settlements of the Rishis, or from nearby villages.

Verses 15 and 16 are of great importance scientifically. Verse 15 is indicative of the scale or the measuring rod they used in the construction of the Altar, and checking its measurements. "Seven were made its enclosing sticks"; this would indicate that the measuring rod to be used should have seven units marked on it, and "thrice seven its pieces". This would show that each one of these units should have three sub-units. According to the Silpasastras, a rod of this description was in use in ancient days, and it was known as Vara rod of seven divisions, each of them subdivided into three Angulas (two and a quarter inches) It is also obvious that in measuring or integrating the circular or irregular contour, the small bits should not have chords more than three Angulas in length. Obviously after constructing the circular Altar, they measured up its periphery to sum up the length of the circumference. Verse 16 may indicate that they used the Archimedian method of inscribing and circumscribing regular polygons in and outside the circle to find

the value of π, as it says that "Seven times seventy rays" were to be drawn, evidently for the purpose of inscribing and circumscribing polygons of 490 sides. The correct value of which will be obtained by inscribing polygons of 490 sides

$$\text{is} = N \operatorname{Sin} \frac{360}{2N}; \text{ where N number of the sides}$$

$$= 490 \operatorname{Sin} \frac{360 \times 60}{2 \times 490}$$

$$= 490 \times \operatorname{Sin} 22$$

$$= 490 \times {\cdot}0064$$

$$= 3{\cdot}1360$$

This is a better value of π than the one envisaged by verse 1. But the accuracy of it depends on the Mathematical table for the Sines. The table used here is that of Dale. It was not likely that the Hindus in ancient days had such accurate tables as we have at present. However, they should receive credit for the idea, or the method they envisaged.

Thus it will be seen that this hymn is in the nature of short notes for students at a demonstration class, when the process of circling the square was explained by a teacher, who in his capacity as the priest gave some hints about the sacrifices that should be performed on the altars. There was little of religion in them, and more of instruction and celebrations. However, it is this hymn by which Manu manipulated to establish caste superiority.

CHAPTER 2

IDENTIFICATION OF THE SUDRAS

There is nothing in the Rig Veda to indicate who the Sudras were except the statement in the Purusha Sukta that they were produced from the feet of Purusha. But there is a hymn in one of the early books of the Atharva Veda from which some idea about the Sudras could be formed. It is AV: IV. 20, by Rishi Matranaman, in which a distinction is drawn between the Aryas and Sudras. The hymn was to be used for the purpose of finding out sorcerers with the help of a herb. It reads thus :—

AV : IV. 20. 1. "He looks on, he looks toward, he looks away, he looks : the sky, the atmosphere, then the earth—all that, O divine one, he looks at.

2. Three skies, three earths, and these six directions severally—by thee let me see all beings, O divine herb !

3. Of that heavenly eagle art thou the eyepupil thou here hast ascended the earth as a wearied bride a litter.

4. May the thousand eyed god set it in my right hand ; with it do I see every one, both who is Sudra and Aryan.

5. Make manifest forms ; do not hide thyself away ; then mayest thou, O thousand eyed one, look upon the 'kimidins'.

6. Show me the sorcerers ; show me the sorceresses ; show all the 'pisacas', with this intent I take hold of thee, O herb !

7. The eye of Kasyapa art thou, and of the four eyed bitch conceal thou not the 'pisaca', like the Sun gliding in the clear sky.
8. I have seized out of shelter the sorcerer, the 'kimidin' with it do I see every one, both Sudra and Aryan.
9. Whichever flies through ths atmosphere, and whichever creeps across the sky; whichever thinks the earth a refuge that 'pisaca' do thou show forth.

According to the commentators, the herb in question was Sada-pushpa, a flower that evidently resembles or suggests an eye. When it was carried round with the repetition of this hymn among the people who gathered round for the purpose of which finding, it was to incline towards the sorcerer in the manner of the water-diviner's twig, towards the underground water. Witch-hunting and witch-finding is still practised among the aborigines, who like the Vedic people have black magicians and White magicians. Among the Oraons the Black magicians are called 'Mati', 'Ojha' or 'Denra'; while the white magicians are called 'Sokta' or 'Bhagat'. Sokta and 'Sukh' may be of the same root, and Sokta may have meant one who procured good health or saved people from maladies. Bhagat and Bhagavan appear to be from the same root. Bhagavan now stands for God; and Bhaga was a god worshipped by both the Rig Vedis and Atharva Vedis (RV : I. 24, AV : I. 24 & c). According to the Sanskrit lexicographers, no one deserved to be called Bhagavan without certain specific attainment. The Oraons too do not call a person a Bhagat, until he has

acquired certain spiritual attainment, and proved his efficiency in cures. Some Bhagats could be seen with a sacred thread round the neck, worn like the Brahmanas when they do Pitru-Tarpana, or give oblations to the departed ancestors.

From the hymn it will be seen that at the witch-finding ritual there were Sudras and Aryans, or the sorcerers and non-sorcerers. The Kimidins like the Pisacas might have been evil spirits. If the Aryan were non-sorcerers or the worshippers of the Vedic gods, as it appears to be, the sorcerers should be Sudras. This presumption should receive weight when it is realised that there is a similar word like Sudra to indicate a sorcerer, namely, Ksudra. Perhaps Sudra may have been an earlier form of Ksudra. The religious rites of the Sudras are still not far removed from Ksudra or Ksudraka rites. The difference between the Brahmana and Sudra even today, broadly speaking, may be that the Brahmanas, like the Vedic Rishis are practitioners of White Magic, while the Sudras may follow Black Magic. Black Magic now is more or less underground, while the White magicians go about as the most respected godlings on the earth.

This may have been the origin of the Sudras. Evidently the Sudras are those who kept away from the Vedic religion, and who refused the baptism of the sacred thread-cum-Gayatri. In the Vedic days there was little difference between the Brahmanas and the Sudras, though later development in Brahmanism made the differences wider. But this does not explain how the Sudras came to be

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recognised as servants. Perhaps a certain hymn in the Rig Veda may throw some light on it. In the Rig Veda BK : VI. 61, the author Bharadvaja will be seen gloating over the destruction of the Bhrisyas by the flood in the river Sarasvati. The reason for this satisfaction may also be seen from the hymn. The Bhrisyas were the scorners of the Vedic gods, and experts in magic art. They appear to have been the original inhabitants of the tract between the Drisadvati and Sarasvati or Brahmavarta, before the Vedic Rishis emigrated there, or as Manu says when "the place was frequented by gods". The Rishis, while they were in Brahmavarta, may not have been mendicants as they were during the days of Chandra Gupta Maurya, but they were prosperous settlers under the Royal patronage of the kings of North Pancala, who themselves were part-time Rishis and hymn-makers. All prosperous communities have always a tendency to attract the less prosperous for service. The Bhrisyas in course of time may have become the servants of the Rishis, and being looked down upon by the Brahmanas on that account. The word Bhrisya and Bhritya may be of the same origin ; it may even be probable that Bhrisya was the old form of Bhritya, which means a servant. However, from the post-Vedic writings it will be seen that all the Sudras were not servants, some of them are mentioned as occupying high positions even as ministers of States.

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If the difference between the Aryas and the Sudras was one of religion, any Sudra could have become an Aryan on accepting the Vedic or the

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Aryan faith. From Kautilya's Arthasastra it will be seen that the Sudras also could have been Aryans by birth, and it will also be seen that a Brahman could have been a slave. "The selling or mortgaging by kinsmen", says Kautilya, "of a Sudra, who is not a born slave and has not attained majority, but *is an Arya by birth*, shall be punished with a fine of 18 Panas, of a Vaisya 24 panas, of a Kshatriya 36 panas, of a Brahman 48 panas. If a person other than kinsmen do the same, they shall be liable to the three amercements and capital punishment (K. A: 182). The three amercements according to Manavadharma Sastra were fines of 250,500 and 1000 panas respectively. The slogan in those days, was "never shall an Aryan be subjected to slavery". But under certain circumstances mortgaging the life of an Arya was permissible. Kautilya says that "if in order to tide over family troubles, to find money for fines or court decrees, or to recover the (confiscated) household implements, the life of an Arya is mortgaged, they (his kinsmen) shall as, soon as possible redeem him (from bondage); and more so if he is a youth or adult capable of giving help". However, sale of persons was no crime among the Mlechchhas, (lower castes), they were allowed "to sell or mortgage the life of their own offspring".

But the slaves were not treated as chattel as it was in other countries or as is depicted in the Brahmanas or post-Vedic literature. The slaves had their privileges, and slavery had its safeguards. From Kautilya's Arthasastra it will be seen :—

(*a*) The offspring of a person sold himself as a slave could be an Aryan, or freeman.

(*b*) A slave could earn money for work done outside the time specified for the master's work.

(*c*) To deceive a slave of his money or any of his privileges was a crime.

(*d*) Violence towards a slave of high birth entitled him to run away from his master.

(*e*) A female slave was not to attend her master while he was bathing naked.

(*f*) Violation of the chastity of a woman slave by her master made both the mother and child free from slavery.

(*g*) Selling a slave in pregnancy without making provision for confinement was a crime punishable with the first amercement.

(*h*) To employ a slave to carry the dead or to sweep ordure, urine or leavings of food was not allowed.

(*i*) Violation of nurses, female cooks, or maid servants of all description entitled their freedom.

(*j*) "When a master has connection with a nurse or pledged female slave against her will, he shall be punished with the middlemost amercement".

(*k*) "The property of a slave shall pass into the hands of his kinsmen, the master was entitled to keep it only in the absence of any kinsmen."

Were the interests of the slaves safeguarded in this fashion anywhere else? This was the condition at any rate till the second century B. C. Hence

it will be easily seen that pious wishes expressed by some post-Vedic writers about the treatment of the Vaisyas and the Sudras were imaginary or those conditions existed only in some of the Rishi settlements where the head of the Rishi Kula ruled as the supreme head of his family, which consisted of Brahmans,,Sudras and Vaisyas ; or these were the interpolations made in the old texts when the Brahmanas as it happened became an unbridled heirarchy at a later period.

Slavery in India was not a political issue in the sense as it is imagined by the European writers. It was mainly economical ; not that in battles the vanquished had not been taken in captivity. In such cases it is specified as is in Kautilya's Arthasastra that the ransom to be paid "should be proportional to the dangerous work done at the time of his capture, or half the amount". In fact every slave was entitled for freedom and full Aryanhood on paying the value for which he or she was enslaved (K. A: 183).

Anyway the Sudras were not slaves as a caste. They became slaves only under circumstances and conditions that made even the Brahmana a slave. The biggest slave owners on the Malabar Coast were the Nairs or the Sudras. The severity index of Malabar slavery will be seen from the fact that even after liberation, most of the Paraya and Pulaya slaves perferred to stay with their masters in preference to and being taken to plantations to slave under European planters. Though slavery was abolished there over a century ago,

even now descendants of the old slaves could be found living happily attached to the descendants of their former masters. It is not due to their slave mentality; but it is due to the advantages which they could still claim. The slaves there, had never been menial servants or household attendants of the masters. The untouchability and unapproachability saved them from the horrors of the Negro slaves elsewhere. The slaves themselves were not free from caste or Jati restrictions among themselves. The Parayas, and the Pulayas, for instance, had no social contact, intermarriage or inter-dining; and between themselves they observed untouchability and unapproachability.

Facts being such, it is nothing short of absurdity to imagine that the Sudras were the Dravidian slaves of the Aryans, and the degraded condition of the Sudras was due to their Dravidian lineage. The Nairs of Malabar are as much Dravidians as the Parayas and the Pulayas but they have always been masters and rulers. If the complexion of the Parayas and Pulayas is darker than that of the Nairs or the Sudras, it is because that the Parayas and the Pulayas like the Oraons and the Mundas of the north, lead an open-air life, in a climate more humid than hot.

CHAPTER 3

POSITION OF THE SUDRAS IN VEDIC DAYS

In Vedic days the difference between the Brahmanas and the Sudras appears to have been only a question of religion. If the Sudras were prepared to accept the Brahmana baptism with the Gayatri and sacred thread they could have become even the highest among the Brahmanas. It has already been shown in Book 1, how the sons of Dirghatamas, through a Sudra woman and a servant at that became Rishis of repute, established Rishi Kulas and made hymns for the Rig Veda. Then the Rishi Kavasha and Vatsa had Sudra servants for their mothers. Vatsa became the head of one of the seven sub-divisions of the famous Bhargava gotra. He fought against Sudasa at the battle of the Ten Kings and was drowned in his attempt to ford the river Parushni (Sutlej). The high eminence reached by Kavasha, the son of a Sudra Nari (woman) may well be appraised by the number of hymns he contributed to the Rig Veda, and the height to which he raised himself. The Rig Vedic hymns Bk. X. 30, 31, 32, 33 and most probably 34 too stand in his name. How he ordered the gods, Brahmanas and kings alike may be seen from the following extracts :—

RV : X. 30. 1. "Let the priest speed the celestial waters...
To him who spreadth far this land I offer.

2. Adhvaryus (the high priest), be ready with the oblations and come with longing to the longing waters,

Down on which looks the purple tinted eagle, pour ye that flowing waves this day, deft handed.

3. Go to the reservoir, O ye Adhvaryus ,worship the waters' child with your oblations.

A consecrated wave he now will give you, so press for him the Soma rich in sweetness.

RV: X. 32. 2. Thou wandereth far O Indra, through spheres of light and realms of earth, the region, thou whom many praise!

Let those who often bring thee to their solemn rites *conquer the noisy burblers who present no gifts*.

RV: X. 33. 4. I the priests' Rishi chose as prince most liberal Kurusravana, the son of Trasadyu's son,

5. Whose three bays harnessed to the car bear me straight onward; I will laud the giver of a thousand meeds......

From the first hymn it is obvious how he ordered the gods as well as the Rishis about. From the third hymn it will be seen how he assumed the distinction of the priest's Rishi, or the priest of the priests, and how he exercised the prerogative of selecting a most generous prince to be his patron. Could a Sudra rise to such heights now unless he became a Christian or Buddhist? The epithet of Kurusravana may indicate that the prince he selected might have been Sudasa himself, who was the most prominent of the Kurus at that time, though the European writers might say that he was an Aryan from outside. The second quotation is of special interest. For, the western writers quote the passage—"the noisy barblers, who present no gifts", as referring to the aborigines or the non-Aryan population of India, who spoke languages unintelli-

gible to the foreign invaders, and who worshipped not the Aryan gods. Their presumption about the Aryan gods is alright; but it is impossible to agree with them that this Sudra Nari's son would consider his mother's tongue as unintelligible babling, though he had left his mother's fold.

From such instances like this it could be easily presumed that during the Vedic period the difference between the Brahmana and Sudra was mainly a question of religion. The difference in religion may also account for some of the restrictions imposed on the Sudras, as is seen from the post-Vedic literature. For instance, a Sudra was not allowed at the Vedic sacrifices. This is still being observed by the Brahmanas even when they perform sacrifices or Yajna in the house of a Sudra on his behalf. In former days this restriction appears to have been a blessing in disguise for the Sudras. If the Sudras were allowed at the sacrifice, most probably they would have been the first victims to be offered to the Vedic gods. Fortunately for the Sudras, the victims had to be Brahmanas, and preference almost in every case was given to the sons of the great Rishis. The Rajanya boys were often offered for sacrifice, but it was done by their own parents. Was there any wonder if the Sudras kept themselves aloof from the Vedic religion. The Sudras were producers in the land; and as such man power was most essential for them. Neither the Rishis nor the Rajanyas were producers, and they, according to the present-day phraseology were parasites on society. The Oraons, and other aborigines are

more considerate to their own sons; they select one of them only if they cannot get hold of an outsider as a victim. According to Kataka Samhita, the Sudras were prohibited from drawing the milk required for the Agnihotra sacrifice. This appears to be a later restriction. For the Ahirs have been the professional milkmen, and they were neither the Brahmanas nor the 'dvijas', or twice-born. Even now some Brahmanas give special sanctity for the milk touched by the Ahirs, and curd and butter prepared by them. Sri Krishna, according to the Puranas, had Ahirs for his foster-parents. The Nampuri Brahmans, when they emigrated to the Malabar coast, took their own Ahirs with them for tending their cattle and milking their cows; the descendants of these Ahirs can still be traced there, though they have become socially inferior to the Sudras, who do menial service in Brahman household. The rule that a Sudra should not touch the milk for Agnihotra must certainly be of a later introduction, and how this would have been resented by the worshippers of Krishna may well be imagined. Satapatha Brahmana prohibits a Brahmana to speak to a Sudra during the period of 'diksha', or fasting period preparatory to certain socio-religious rites. This appears to have been the practice among the followers of all religions. In Travancore, no Syrian Christian priest would speak even to a high Brahmana on his way to the church for Sunday service.

Though the orthodox Hindus claim great antiquity for all their post-Vedic books, restriction such as these imposed on the Sudra could not have been

imposed until very late in the history of Hinduism. During the Nanda rule such invidious distinctions could not have existed, neither could they have been promulgated during the regime of the Guptas. If such rules were ever in force, they could only have had local application, in some secluded Rishi settlements or other. Till late in the third century B. C. the Brahmana habitations appear to have been in isolated and secluded places. Kautilya says that "the king shall make provision for pasture ground on uncultivable tracts. Brahmanas shall be provided with forests for Soma plantation, for religious learning, and for the performance of penance, such forests being granted with safety for animate or inanimate objects, and being named after the tribal name (gotra) of the Brahmana residents there."

CHAPTER 4

COLOUR AND CASTE DISTINCTION

Caste according to some writers is based on colour, the colour of the skin of a race, and not necessarily of the individuals. It was Linnaeus, about the middle of the 18th century, who first divided humanity into four divisions according to colour, 'the white European, the red American, the yellow Asiatic, and the black African, though he did not intend this to be anything more than a superficial'. About a century later Darwin searched for "a natural classification, according to the actual descent or race, or race-mark that co-exist with the whole mass of properties that stand for the inheritance." Though it is a questionable point whether colour could serve as a race-mark in this sense, the colour complex has been taken up seriously by the Aryanologists in India, for in the post-Vedic literature, four 'varnas', and 'varnaśrama-dharmas' are mentioned. Varna generally means colour or kind; and Varnasrama dharma means group duties, that are expected to be performed by, are inherent in each kind. The Varna divisions, according to the post-Vedic-literature, are Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra, or those who performed the Brahmana duties, Kshatriya duties, Vaisya duties and Sudra duties. According to Kautilya's Arthasastra :—

"The duty of the Brahmana is to study, teaching, performance of sacrifice, officiate in others'

sacrificial performance and the giving and receiving of gifts".

"That of a Kshatriya is to study, performance of sacrifice, giving gifts, military occupation, and protection of life."

"That of a Vaisya is study, performance of sacrifice, giving gifts, agriculture, cattle-breeding, and trade."

"That of a Sudra is the serving of the twice-born (dvijati), agriculture, cattle-breeding, and trade (varta), the profession of artisans and court-bards (Karu-kusilava-karma)."

The true nature of these divisions may be judged from the next few lines in the text, where a man's life is divided into four with appropriate duties for each :—

"The duty of a householder is earning livelihood by his own profession, marriage among his equals of different ancestral Rishis, intercourse with his wedded wife after her monthly ablution, gifts to gods, ancestors, guests and servants and the eating of the remainder."

"That of a student (Brahmacharin) is learning the Vedas, fire-worship, ablution, living by begging, and devotion to his teacher, to the teacher's son, or to an older classmate."

"That of a Vanaprastha (forest-recluse) is observance of chastity, sleeping on the bare ground, keeping twisted locks, wearing deer skin, fire worship, ablution, worship of gods ancestors and guests, and living upon foodstuffs procurable in forests."

"That of an ascetic retired from the world (parivarajaka) is complete control of the organs of sense, abstaining from all kinds of work, disowning money, keeping away from society, living by begging, dwelling in forests, and purity both internal and external."

"Harmlessness, truthfulness, purity, freedom from spite, abstinence from cruelty, and forgiveness are duties common to all."

The first four divisions cannot but be exactly in the nature of the second four divisions. As the householder's caste (jati) is not different from the caste of a Vanaprastha or Brahmachari, a Sudra's caste needs not to be different from that of a Vaisya or Kshatriya. Even if these duties were intended for four respective castes, there is nothing in them which could be taken as derogatory to the Sudras. Yet it is this classification based on specialised duties which the latter day Brahmanas have exploited to enhance their caste superiority and class prerogative. On the other hand, if there is anything in this, it singles out the Sudras as workers and producers, without which no state or community could exist apart from thriving. Without the Sudras to find the wherewithal, how could the Brahmanas perform the sacrifices, and how could the Kshatriya have anything to protect? The Sudras served the society by agriculture, cattle-breeding, trade and other professions. It was possible to carry on with cattle breeding and agriculture without education; but trade and profession could not have been done effectively and efficiently without education. There is a general impression

that the Sudras had no education and they were mere manual labourers ; but they could not have been court-bards or Karu-kusilava-karmas without education. There was no branch of study from which the Sudras were excluded. Even now the best architects, the best physicians and the best astronomers of the old school specially on the Malabar coast are from the untouchable and partially unapproachable Sudras. The Sudras were not debarred from the study of the Vedas in ancient days. Manu says that "in case of necessity, a student is required to learn the Veda from one who is not a Brahmana, and, as that instruction continues, to honour his instructor with obsequious assiduity" (Man-Dhar: II. 241). "A believer in scriptures may receive pure knowledge even from a Sudra ; a lesson of the highest virtue, even from a Chandala." (Man-Dhar: II. 238). If the Sudras were not entitled to the Vedas, what was the necessity for such a ruling? However, it was from their service to the community that the latter day Brahmanas made out that the Sudra's duty was servitude.

The apologists of caste distinctions in India found a good argument in the colour enunciated by Linneaus. As Varna means colour, it is presumed that the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra sub-divisions were based on colour. Though this idea was foreign to post-Vedic writers, it has become almost an obsession with the present-day writers. According to them the three upper divisions, Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaisya are descendants of the Aryan conquerors, and the Sudras

are the descendants of the enslaved aborigines or the Dravidians. But they fail to explain the differences in colour among the upper classes or even among Brahmanas themselves. Some Brahmanas are no doubt fair, but most of them are as dark as the Dravidians; and the Brahmanas, who live in localities inhabited by the aboriginal tribes, do not show much of the Aryan characteristics.

Inferiority based on colour does not appear to have had its existence before the days of Negro slavery. There was no colour bar between the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon about 1,000 B. C. The slavery in Greece or Rome does not appear to have had anything to do with the colour bar. When Seleucos gave a daughter in marriage to Chandra Gupta in the third century B. C. there was no colour bar. But since the days of Linnaeus, the colour theory has been that the superiority of the European civilisation so far advanced is attributed to their white colour. Similarly the advocates of the Aryan invasion of India appear to think that the superiority of the Aryan culture is due to the Aryans' white colour, though the European whites may not agree that the Indo-Aryans were, or their descendants are white.

The western writers, who are pre-possessed with the colour complex affirm that the Indians have had a preference for the white colour. To substantiate this preference they say the actors in India use white powder for their makeup. But they fail to realise that the aborigine make-up of the devil is also done in white colour. If one is

to be guided by Manava-dharmasastra, it will be seen that even the Brahmanas were not much enamoured of white colour. In the selection of a bride Manu disqualifies some features that are characteristically of the white race, such as reddish hair and down on the body; on the other hand, he gives preference to certain Dravidian characteristics such as the softness of the skin, good teeth and luxuriant growth of hair (Man-Dhar : III. 7). Even the ideal of the Hindu poets has never been white colour, they always depicted their heroines with golden-coloured skin. Indians have been in the habit of giving gold to their children to acquire a golden tint to their skin ; even those who cannot afford to do it, give gold rubbed with honey to a new-born babe, as the first meal, at its birth.

There is an interesting passage in the Santi Parva section of Mahabharata about the origin of the four Varnas. It is given in the form of a dialogue between two Rishis, Bhrigu and Bharadvaja :

Bhrigu speaks : "The colour (Varna) of the Brahmana was white ; that of the Kshatriya red; that of the Vaisya yellow; and that of the Sudra black".

Bharadvaja interrupts : "If the caste (Varna) of the four classes are distinguished by their colour, then a confusion of all the castes is observable........."

Bhrigu answers : "There is no difference of castes ; this world having been at first created by Brahma entirely Brahmanic, became (after-

wards) separated into castes in consequence of works. Those dvijas (twice-born), who were found of sensual pleasure, fiery, irascible, prone to violence, who had forsaken their duty, and were strong-limbed, fell into the condition of the Kshatriyas. Those dvijas, who derived their livelihood from kine, who were yellow, who subsisted by agriculture, and who neglected to practise their duties, entered into the state of Vaisyas. Those dvijas, who were addicted to mischief and falsehood, who were covetous, who lived by all kinds of work, who were black and had fallen from purity, sank into the condition of Sudras."

This is different from what Manu has said. According to Manu-Smriti every one is born a Sudra, action makes one a dvija, and knowledge of Brahma makes one a Brahmana. Anyway according to both Manu and Bhrigu the divisions into Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra are not according to birth or heredity. It is according to one's own action guided by his inclination. Just as one could have become a carpenter or a blacksmith, one could have become a Brahmana or Kshatriya by choice. Among the descendants of Bharata or Kuru how this prerogative has been exercised is amply shown in Book 1.

Varna or Varnasrama distinctions might not have had any more significance than four classifications like A, B, C and D or 1, 2, 3 and 4. It was not only in respect of human beings that the ancient Hindus used the terms Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra for classification. It will be

seen from the Silpasastras, or treaties on architecture, that they used the same terms for classifying the land according to the extent and quality, and also to signify certain constants 1, 3, 5, and 7 in certain formulas. They divided the land into four Varnas, white, yellow, brown and black. The white soil they called Brahmana, yellow soil Kshatriya, brown soil Vaisya and black soil Sudra. A plot of land, or an area whose length was equal to breadth was called Brahmana, a plot whose length was one-and one-eighth times the breadth they called Kshatriya, and those plots that had the length one and one-sixth, and one and one-fourth, times the breadth they called the Vaisya and Sudra respectively. Then certain perimeters, which they derived from the length, hiding the element of breadth, by use of constants 1, 3, 5, and 7, they designated as Brahmana, Kshatriya, Sudra and Vaisya.

$$\text{Brahmana perimeter} = \frac{L \times 8 + 1}{3}$$

$$\text{Kshatriya} \quad " \quad = \frac{L \times 8 + 3}{3}$$

$$\text{Sudra} \quad " \quad = \frac{L \times 8 + 5}{3}$$

$$\text{Vaisya} \quad " \quad = \frac{L \times 8 + 7}{3};$$

where L = length.

Having forgotten the real significance of these formulae and classifications the orthodox architects and the later day authors of the Silpasastras have been asserting that the Brahmana Perimeter is

to be used in the design of a Brahmana's house and the Sudra perimeter was for the Sudra's house, and so on. If it were so, the dimensions of a Brahmana's house must be the smallest. Likewise if the colour qualification of the land was exclusive the Brahmanas should live only on certain sea-coasts and desert regions, while the rich black cotton growing tracts of central India should be exclusively for the Sudras.

However, nobody ever appears to have adhered to the Varnasramadharma or caste duties. The Brahamanas would appear to have been great offenders in this respect, only a few followed their prescribed duties, others took up all kinds of professions and callings, as is done even today. The military occupation was not entirely for the Kshatriyas. From Kautiliya's Arthasastra it will be seen that the Brahmanas and the Sudras were as keen fighters as the Kshatriyas and the Vaisyas, and there were armies or regiments composed of each group, somewhat like the Garhwalis, Rajputs and Madrasis of the British regime, and Vishnu Gupta discusses the merits of each regiment thus :—

"My teacher says that the armies composed of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas or Sudras, that which is mentioned first is, on account of bravery, better to be enlisted than the one subsequently in the order of enumeration. No, says Kautilya (who himself was a Brahmana), the enemy may win over to himself the army of Brahmanas by means of prostration. Hence, the army of the Kshatriyas trained in the art of wielding weapons is better or the army of the Vaisyas or Sudras

having great numerical strength (is better)". (K-A: 345).

From the Jataka stories it will be seen that the Brahmanas lived even as farm-hands, hunters and trappers of wild animals, while the Sudras were kings, potentates, and army commanders. Certainly then all Srudas were not delegated to do menial service, as Manava-dharma Sastra makes it to be understood. The text of Manu-Smriti, however, will itself indicate that some Sudras were occupying high positions. For, it says—"of that king who stupidly looks on, while a Sudra decides cases, the kingdom itself shall be embarrassed, like a cow in the deep mire" (Man-Dhar: VIII.21). Could any Brahmana have written this when the Nandas were in power, or when the Mauryas were ruling, or even during the reign of the great Guptas, till the sixth century A. D.?

The Varnasrama divisions do not appear to have been anything more than an academic classification. According to Vishnu Purana, one who initiated such a division was Saunaka, a descendant of Kshatravirdha, king of Kasi. As Kshatravirdha was a great grandson of Pururavas, the first Aila or Aryan king it could be said that it was the Aryans, who first introduced Varna distinction. However, Saunaka does not appear to have introduced the four divisions, he may have laid down the basis of the distinction as Vis, and Sudra, or one who followed the Vedic religion and one who did not, for even a caste like Brahmana may not have existed at his time. The same Purana says that it was Bhrigubhumi, a son or descendant of Bhriga "who laid down the

rules of the four castes." Even this appears to be a loose statement. If it were correct, it should mean that the duties of different Varnas had been formulated about the time of Sudasa, who himself had the Sudra Nari's son Kavasha for his high priest.

The fluid state of 'Varnas' or castes would appear to have continued, at any rate, until the Jataka stories were written. From the evidence of these stories Rhys Davids says that "the three upper classes had originally been one; for the nobles and priests were merely those members of the third class, the Vessas (the Vis of the Vedas, or Vaisyas of the Puranic period), who raised themselves into higher social rank. And though more difficult probably than it had been, it was still possible for analogous *changes to take place. Poor men could be nobles* and both could become Brahmanas". He was speaking of the Buddhist period, and he appears to think that Buddhism had something to do with such a fluid state of the society. But it has been true for all time in India except for the last two centuries or so, until the people became caste-conscious. In the Vedic period there was no difficulty for any one to become a Brahmana provided one was prepared to go through the dvija baptism. In post-Vedic period even some eminent teachers of the Upanishad remained as Sudras, for to be a Brahmana was no *sine qua non* for respectability.

CHAPTER 5

EVOLUTION OF THE BRAHMANAS

The Brahmana in early Rig Vedic days, would appear to have been a minor attendant at the Vedic sacrifices. He was one of the sixteen who completed the squad of sacrificers. At the sacrifices each one had a special duty to perform ; and according to the magnitude of the sacrifice, the numbers of each type were to be increased. The presence of so many men at a sacrifice may well be appreciated when it is realised, that even at ordinary sacrifices, big goats or huge animals like oxen had to be washed, tied and immolated ; meat had to be cut and prepared, some had to be engaged in cooking, some had to get the Soma made drink ready while others had to do all kinds of odd jobs. None of them were priests in the ordinary sense except the Patri or Purohit. Among them, according to Sayana the great commentator of the Vedas, Prasustri was the master of the ceremony, Hotri was the invoker, and Adhvaryu was the presenter of the offering.

The Brahmana is mentioned only in a few places in the Rig Veda. He is first mentioned in RV : I.15 and 16, where Indra is asked to drink Soma with Ritu "from Brahmana's bounty". "The Brahmana's office here", according to Griffith, "may have been to hold some ladle or vase in which the offering is presented". In addition to holding the cup or

handling the drink, it will be seen from RV: V.31.4 that they had to sing hymns, for it is stated that "the Brahmanas with their songs exalting Indra increased his strength that he might slaughter Ahi". If the singing of the Ricas or the hymns that were to be sung aloud, was the Brahmana's duty, the meaning of some obscure passages in RV : I.164 may become apparent. It is stated that "Speech hath been measured out in four divisions, the Brahmanas who have understanding know them. Three kept in close concealment cause no motion ; of speech, men speak only the fourth division". Speech here stands for the Vedas with four divisions of Yajur, Saman, Atharva and Rig. Of these the Ricas or the Rig Vedic hymns were to be sung aloud ; hence the significance of the statement that "man speak only the fourth", and the Brahmanas "who have the understanding", or who had learned the Rig knew how to chant it. These Brahmanas or the Rig reciters should not be mistaken for the Saman chanters, who were of a different group. The Saman singers "thrice eighty" are mentioned in the first Bharadvaja hymn, Atharva Veda Bk : II. 12. 4.

In RV : VI. 75. 10 it is said that "the Brahmana and the fathers (sacerdotal fathers) meet for Soma draughts, and graciously inclined, unequalled Heaven and Earth". What happened when they met may be seen from RV : II. 37, in which Visvamitra makes the following revelations :—

1. Enjoy the fill of meath out of the Hotar's cup ; Adhvaryus : he desires a full draught poured for him.

Bring it to him ; seeking this he gives granter wealth, drink Soma with the Ritus from the Hotar's cup.

2. He whom of old I call on, him I call on now, he is to be invoked ; his name is he who gives. Here brought by priests in Soma meath, granter, drink Soma from the Potar's cup (Potar is the purifier).

3. ......Bold one, thou who grantest wealth, drink Soma with the Ritus, from the Neshtar's cup. (Neshtar is "one of the chief officiating priests, who leads forward the wife of the institutor of the Sacrifice".)

4. From Hotar's cup and Potar's he hath drunk and joyed ; the proffered food hath pleased him from the Neshtar's bowl.

The fourth cup undisturbed, immortal, let him drink who giveth wealth, the cup of the wealth giving god.

5. Yoke, O ye Twain, to-day your hero-bearing car, swift moving hitherward: your loosing place—place is here.

Mix the oblations, then come hither with the meath, and drink the Soma, ye rich in abundant strength.

6. Agni, accept the fuel and our offered gift ; accept the prayer of man, accept our eulogy.

Do thou with all, with Ritu, O thou excellent, fain make the great gods all fain taste the gift we bring."

Are these not different toasts with benedictions at the end? Here the Brahmanas have become toast-masters.

First the Brahmana's duty or task of singing hymns at the sacrifice may have had only an individual application; but from RV: II. 43. 2 it will be seen that it became hereditary; for it says that "thou like the chanter-priest chantest the Sama Bird; thou singest at libations like a Brahmana's son". Even according to the Atharva Veda, the Brahmana's duty at the sacrifices must have been singing hymns loud, for in AV: IV. 15. 12 and 13, it is said that "let the speckled-armed frogs croak along the water-courses, having lain for a year, (like) Brahmanas performing a vow." From RV: VII. 50 it will be seen, that the Brahmanas ceased to be mere 'croakers of the hymns', and they became hymn-makers, and special priests of Brihaspati "with his seven rays", who is described as "the king with whom the Brahmanas hath precedence." The sage Brihaspati was an Angirasa; but the god of the hymn was not this saintly ancestor. The description of him as one "with seven rays" will indicate that Brihaspati here is the star, which forms one of the Saptarsis, or the Great Bear. In Book 1 it was shown that the Asvins and Pushan worships were stellar; here is another instance of stellar worship. The author of the hymn is one Vamadeva, and in RV: BK. IV. 55 out of 58 hymns 1—41, and 45—58 stand

in his name. Of these fifteen hymns are exclusively in praise of Agni, though there is an equal number in praise of Indra, which would indicate that the author was mainly a worshipper of Agni and Indra, who were the rising gods of the Rig Vedis. The author of the hymn is a Brahmana and a Vamadeva, but he is not the same Vamadeva who is the author of the Atharva Vedic hymn 9, Book III, which is nothing but a sorcery hymn for curing a disease called Viskanda. The Vamadeva hymns in the Rig Veda indicate no sign of sorcery, though the author appears to have had an Atharva Vedic ancestry. For, from RV: IV. 2. 15 and 16, it will be seen that he was an Angirasa, as he says that "May we, Angirases be sons of Heaven, and radiant, burst the wealth-containing mountains. As in the days of old our ancient fathers, speeding the work of holy worship, Agni, sought pure light and devotion, singing praises...". Angirases were originally Atharva Vedic, and practitioners of and spells and sorcery and their share in the development of the Atharva Veda will be seen from its alternative name of Atharvangirasa. In Book 1 it was shown how the Angirasa hymns became scarce in later books of the Atharva Veda, and how they joined the Rig Vedis. Just as Sunahsepa, son of an Angiras and one of the first dissenters from the Atharva Vedis, feared the wrath of Varuna, a similar fear will be seen in Vamadeva hymn in RV: IV. 1, verses 4 and 5, which read thus :—

> "Do thou, how knowest Varuna O Agni, put far away from us the god's displeasure. Best sacrificer, bright one refulgent, remove

> far from us all those who hate us. Be thou, O Agni, bearest us with succour, our closest Friend while now this morn is breaking. Reconcile to us Varuna, be bounteous; enjoy the gracious juice; be swift to hear us."

There were many branches or Gotras among the Angirases; by RV: IV. 4. 11, Vamadeva specifies his gotra, when he says that—"Through words and kinship I destroy the mighty; this power I have from Gotama father. Mark thou this speech of ours, O Thou Most Youthful, Friend of the House (Agni), exceeding wise, invoker". In Volume I it was shown how one Dirghatamas a descendant of Utatya Angiras married a Sudra woman and through his sons two Rishi Kulas, Kakshivants and Gotamas were established in Manbhum or Bihar. But Gotama, the son of Dirghatamas, does not appear to have been the father of this Vamadeva; father may have been used here in the sense of an ancestor. The reason for this presumption may be seen from Vamadeva hymn RV: IV. 15.—

> 4. "He who kindled eastward for Srinjaya, Devavata's son, resplendent tamer of the foe.
>
> 7. When Sahadeva's princely son with two bay horses thought of me, summoned by him I drew not back.
>
> 8. And truly those two noble bays I straightaway took when offered me, from Sahadeva's princely son.

9. Long, O Asvins may he live, your care, ye gods, the princely son of Sahadeva, Somaka."
10. Cause him the youthful prince the son of Sahadeva to enjoy long life, O ye gods."

From the Puranas it will be seen that Somaka was the last of the kings of North Pancala and a descendant of Sudasa, the supposed Aryan conqueror. As Somaka is mentioned in this hymn the author Vamadeva's date should at the earliest be 30 B. A., and Gotama's time should be about 55 B. A., showing a difference of 25 generations.

The above quotations alone will show that these Brahmanas, though descended from a Sudra Nari, had become leaders of thought and priests of importance. The high position the Brahmanas were gaining among the group of priests will be seen from RV : IV. 94, which says that—"Agni in fire at sacrifice, and in the house as lord thereof and as a Brahmana takes his seat". At the first stage in the development of Brahmanism, the Brahmanas were emulating the gods, and now it is seen from this hymn, the gods or the greatest of gods, Agni, is made to emulate the Brahmana. In RV : III. 13, 6, another Rishi, Rishabha, addresses Agni as a Brahmana. Again in another hymn, RV : VII. 7. 5, another Rishi Vasistha Mitra-Varuni, addresses Agni as Brahmana. It might be in pursuance of this ideology that Agni began to be depicted by sculptors as a Brahmana with the sacred thread.

In Book 1, it was shown that the Brahmanas or Brahmans were a gotra of the Atharva Vedis,

and it was they who developed the theme of Brahman as the 'framework' of creation, and established the institution of Brahmacharya, for cultivating the power of Brahman. As there is no evidence to show that the Brahmanas of the Rig Veda came from outside, it may well be that they were the descendants of the Atharva Vedic Brahmanas who joined the Rig Vedic group, in the manner of the Angirases.

However, when the number of hymns, that were to be sung aloud increased, the Brahmanas had to devote a considerable time in committing them to memory. First the fathers must have sat with their sons, and taught them how to chant the hymns. Then competent teachers among them may have been selected to teach groups of Brahmana boys. This appears to have been the beginning of the Guru-Kula. To enable the students to concentrate their attention more on study, they were removed from home surroundings, and sent to the Guru-Kula institutions, where they were to be under strict disciplinary conditions and to lead an ascetic life. Intensified study made them experts; and when they came out, they began to receive the respect on account of their erudition. This was how the Brahmanas began to be respected for the first time. As without the chanting of the hymns, no Rig Vedic sacrifices could be performed in the prescribed form, the Brahmanas became indispensable at the sacrifices. Consequently their position among the priests became higher. The first sign of their importance will be seen in the creation of the post of Potars. The Potars were

assistants to the Brahmanas, whose duties were some of the original duties of a Brahmana, such as cleansing and passing the cups, and cutting and preparing the meat after the sacrifice; while the Brahmana was left entirely for the intellectual and more honourable task of repeating the hymns. Still for a long time, he was not the Hotar, who heralded or invoked the gods, nor was he Adhavaryu, who was the expert at the sacrifices or high priest, who know all the procedures at the sacrifices, the correct dimensions of the altars, and the mystic and scientific secrets they contained. The Hindus in ancient days were for division of labour, whether it was at the sacrifices, or in the work-rooms. As long as the experts were left alone to do their own work, without any interference from outside, India was on the path of progress. The Brahmana was once only a member of the 'priestly-politic.' But due to his superior training and education, in course of time, he became their leader, nay even god himself. What has been the consequence? The Brahmanas possessed the Vedas, for centuries they knew the hymns by rote, but unfortunately they knew little of the secret maintained by the Adhavaryas and other experts, who disappeared altogether with their secrets, with the rise of the Brahmanas to power. When the Brahmanas themselves did not know the secrets, contained in the Vedas, they gave their own interpretations to the Vedic texts, but always with a view to enhance their prerogative. Every post-Vedic book, and every Purana will amply justify this statement.

The respect the Brahmanas once received was not on acconnt of their primogeniture, or being born from the face of Brahma, a god whom the Rig Vedis, Brahmanas or others never worshipped, but it was due to their service to the community. Rishi Mayobhu says that "the Brahmachari goes about serving (vis) much service ; he becomes one limb of the gods". (AV : V. 17.5), which appears to have been rewritten later on by the Rig Vedic Rishi Juhu rewrites thus—"The Brahmachari goes engaged in duty ; he is a member of the god's own body". Lannman says that the Mayobhu hymn is of a comparatively later origin, and he is correct. How late it is may be seen from the internal evidences from the three hymns which stand in his name AV : V. 17.18 and 19, all of them are about the Brahmanas, first about Brahmana's wife, and the other two about Brahmana's cow ; and all three exhibit a desire to establish the Brahmana privilege, which the Brahmanas did not appear to have had until after the Mauryan period, or if they had it could have been only in their secluded pastoral settlements. The class prerogative that the Brahmanas were trying to establish by means of these hymns will be of great interest in comparison to what they succeeded in establishing, according to Manu-Smriti in a later period.

AV : V. 17.8 says :—"And if (there were) ten former husbands of a woman not Brahmana—provided a Brahmana has seized her hand, he is alone her husband." Then medieval history of India will show that the Brahmanas had taken full advantage of this Vedic sanction ; which would appear

to have been worked in an ingenious way. The chief ceremony in a Brahmana marriage is 'panigrahana', or that part of the ceremony in which the bridegroom takes hold of the bride's hand. Hence according to this hymn, when the Brahmana takes hold of the hand of even a married woman, she automatically becomes his wife. It was no wonder that the aborigines, who respect their women, left the Brahmanas and took shelter in the jungles. Consequences for disobedience are further stipulated in the hymn. "In whose kingdom a Brahmana's wife is obstructed through ignorance", no draft oxen will be born, no spotted cow will give milk, and there will be no white horses with black ears. Evidently this was to be applicable only in some out of the way Brahman settlements. But all these have contributed to the Brahman prerogatives in later days. It was somewhat in a similar manner that the Brahmanas protected their cows. AV : V. 18 and 19 says that the Brahmana's cow was not given by gods for others to eat. One should consider that it is an "ill-poisonous adder enveloped in hide". It could be eaten only by "a noble who says let me live today, not to-morrow", or by one "Who is hated, evil and self-ruined". "The Brahmana's cow being cooked, as far as she penetrates smites out the brightness of a kingdom; no virile race is born". "Cruel is the cutting up of her; harsh to eat is her prepared flesh; in that the milk of her is drunk, that verily is an offence against the Fathers". Finally it is stated that the Brahmana's cow when killed "becoming eight-footed, four-eyed, four-

eared, four-jawed, two-mouthed, two tongued shakes down the kingdom of the Brahmana-scather" Who would dare to touch a Brahmana's cow under such curses and imprecations ?

But the Brahmana reaction to eating meat in general and cow's meat in particular appears to have been different at any rate till, the eighth century B. C. Macdonell says, in his Vedic Index, that—the eating of the flesh was something quite regular, in Vedic days—"the ritual offering of flesh contemplated that the gods will eat it and the Brahmanas would eat the offerings"—"Slaying of a great ox (mahoksha) or a great (mahaja) for a guest was regularly prescribed" in Satapatha-Brahmana, and Sankhyana Grihya-Sutra; "the great sage Yajnavalkya was wont to eat the meat of milch cows and bullock if only it was amsala (firm or tender)" ; and "the marriage ceremony was accompanied by the slaying of oxen, clearly for food". According to RV : X.85.13 :— "In Magha (January-February) days oxen are slain, in Arjun (February-March) they wed the bride". How the meat of the sacrificial animal was distributed among the priests may be seen from the Aitareya Brahmana of the Rig Veda, chapter VII. I, which says :—

"The two jaw bones with the tongue are to be given to the Prastotar,
the breast in the form of an eagle to the Udgitar ;
the throat with the palate to the Prathihartar ;
the lower part of the right loins to the Hotar ;
the left to the Brahmana ;
the right thigh to the Maitravaruna ;

the left to the Brahmanachhamsi ;
the right side with the shoulder to the Adhvaryu ;
the left side to those who accompany the chants;
the left shoulder to the Pratipasthar ;
the lower part of the right arm to the Neshtar ;
the lower part of the left arm to the Potar ;
the upper part of the right thigh to the Achhavaka ;
the left to the Agnidra ;
the upper part of the right arm to Atreya ;
the left to the Sadasya ;
the backbone and the urinal bladder to the Grahapati (sacrificer) ;
the right feet to the Grahapati who gives a feasting ;
the upper lip is in common to both (Grahapati and his wife), which is to be divided by the Grahapati.

They offer the tail of the animal to the wives, but they should give it to a Brahmana, the fleshy process (manikah) of the neck and three gristles (hikashah) to the Gravastut ; three other gristles and one-half of the fleshy part on the back (vaikartta) to Unnetar ; the other half of the fleshy part on the neck and the left lobe (kloma) to the slaughterer, who should present it to a Brahmana, if he himself did not happen to be a Brahmana. The head is to be given to the Subrahmanya, the skin belongs to him (Subrahmanya) who spoke, svah sutyam (tomorrow at the sacrifice) ;

that part of the sacrificial animal at a Soma sacrifice which belongs to Ila (sacrificial food) is

common to all priests; only for the Hotar it is optional."

According to the text all these portions of the animal amount to 36 pieces. Surely such care in the distribution will indicate that these pieces were received not for throwing away as some would interpret, but certainly it was for use of the recipients, to eat as 'prasada' or sanctified food.

CHAPTER 6

CHANGES IN THE STATUS OF THE BRAHMANAS

From Kautilya's Arthashastra it will be seen that whatever consideration that the Brahmanas received from the State was not based on their social superiority or due to their birth from the face of Brahma. Kautilya did not even support the claim of the Rig Vedic Brahmanas that there were only 'thrais' or three Vedas, Rig, Yajur and Sama. His ruling was that the Atharva and Itihasa should be considered as Vedas. It will be seen that, though he himself was a Brahamana, he did not specify that the Brahmanas should be given the high post of ministers. Knowledge and ability were the only criterion to hold high appointments. Even for the post of the High Priest, knowledge of the Rig Veda was not considered necessary. He says that—"Him whose family and character are highly spoken of, who is well educated in the Vedas, and the six Angas, is skilled in the readings of portents, is well-versed in the science of government, and who is obedient and who can prevent calamities, providential or human, by performing such expiatory rites as are prescribed in the Atharva Veda, the king shall employ as High Priest" (K-H : 16). Though the king was to take counsel from priests of such high qualifications, his power over the priests appears to have been wide; for it is said that "the king shall dismiss a priest, who

when ordered, refuse to teach the Vedas to an out-caste person, or to officiate in a sacrificial performance undertaken by an out-caste person" (K-16).

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It is no wonder that the Rig Vedic Brahmanas did not like the kingdom of Magadha. Magadha had always been the subject of ridicule by the post-Vedic writers. According to Samkhyana Aranyaka no good Brahman was expected to live in the kingdom of Magadha. The contempt for Magadha is still shown by the Brahmanas of Mithila (North Bihar) by avoiding to bathe on the Magadha bank of the sacred river Ganga. Yet what India is proud of now is almost exclusively the civilization and culture of Magadha. Even independent India had to look towards Magadha for a symbol of greatness. The Atharva Vedis do not appear to have had any prejudice against Magadha. The whole book No. XV of the Atharva Veda or what are termed Vratya hymns glorify the Vratyas or the people of Magadha as a "superior power in the universe"—From the Puranas it will be seen that Magadha came to prominence from the day of Brahadratha (21 B. A.) or about the 13th century B. C. Twelve generations of kings after Brahadratha, the hated Jarasandha whom they called a demon, extended his kingdom as far as Mathura in the north-west, and gave an uncomfortable time to the Puranic hero, god Krishna. Vedic Brahmanas did not come to power untill they became the rulers of Magadha 181 B. C. Buddhism originated and flourished in Magadha, the Vedic religion did get a new lease of life in Magadha under the Sungas. To-day though the Brahmanised Hindus

जोधपुर विश्वविद्यालय ग्रन्थालय

of Magadha are proud to claim their descent from the people of Aryavarta, the aborigines of Magadha, probably the descendants of the Vratyas are the only class of people in the whole of India that resist Brahmanisation most.

The kind of privileges that the Brahmanas had during the days of Chandra Gupta Maurya may be seen from the following extracts from Kautilya's Arthasastra—

(1) The king "should personally attend to the business of gods, of the heretics, or Brahmanas learned in the Vedas, of cattle, of sacred places, of minors, the aged, the afflicted, and the helpless and of women."

(2) "Brahmadeya-lands yielding sufficient produce and exempted from taxes and fines shall be granted to those, who perform sacrifices (rivik) spiritual guides, priests and those learned in the Vedas."

(3) "Brahmanas shall be provided with forests for Soma plantation, for religious learning and for the performance of penance......."

(4) "Men learned in the Vedas, persons engaged in penance, as well as labourers may take with them salt for food......without paying toll."

(5) "Those who are learned in the Vedas and those that are engaged in penance may take from the field ripe fruits and flowers for the purpose of worshipping their gods, rice and barley for similar purpose."

(6) "Brahmanas, ascetics, children, the aged the afflicted, royal messengers, and pregnant women shall be provided with......free passes to cross the rivers."

These may be taken as the maximum privileges the Brahmanas enjoyed during the days of Kautilya. Whatever consideration was shown to them was on account of their roll as Vedic students or religious mendicants. But there are the following statements which would indicate that the Brahmana prestige was on ascendency—

(1) "If among the Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras and out-castes (Antavasayins), any one of a lower caste abuse the habits of a higher caste, the fine shall increase from three 'panas' upward (commencing from the lowest caste).

(2) "That the limb of a Sudra with which he strikes a Brahmana shall be cut off."

As these are not in conformity with other statements in the text, they should be taken as later additions. However, the true index of a Brahmana's position in society may be seen from such statements as the Brahmanas though learned in the Vedas should "not be taken as witnesses, excepting in case of transactions" in their own community.

Difference of opinion exists as to the precise date and authorship of Kautilya's Arthasastra. Some are of opinion that it was written by Kautilya himself under his alternative name of Vishnu Gupta, about the end of the third century B. C. While others are of opinion that it was written by Vishnu Gupta in the second century A. D. First

of all Vishnu Gupta and Kautilya could not have been the same. For Kautilya or Chanakya was a Brahmana; while Vishnu Gupta with the non-Brahman Jati distinction of Gupta could never have been a Brahmana, especially after the Nanda rule, when the Brahman and non-Brahman differences had become more prominent. Then there is a significant passage in the text itself, which reads thus:—"Having seen discrepancies in many ways on the part of the writers of commentaries on the Sastras, Vishnu Gupta himself has made (this) Sutra and commentary". This could clearly indicate that it is not Kautilya's original Arthasastra that we have at present, though it would contain many a passage from it, and the present work is based on Vishnu Gupta's commentary on it. Then in many a passage in the text, the author gives Kautilya's opinion on many a subject, as quite different from that of his teacher, which are often at variance; which should indicate that some considerable time must have passed between Kautilya's time and the production of the work. Further the last sentence in the text as quoted above may throw some doubt whether the present version itself had been written even by Vishnu Gupta. Hence the earliest date 200 B. C. as well as the latest date 200 A. D. given to the text can both be correct. However, if the book is of a later date, it will only prove the Brahman supremacy was still of a later date.

Manu-Smriti, on the other hand, will show that it was written after the Brahmanas became supreme

in the land. The following extracts from Manavadharma Sastra by Kulluka may substantiate this presumption :—

(1) Man-Dhar : VII. 37 : "Let the king having risen at early dawn, respectfully attend to the Brahmanas, learned in the Vedas and in the science of ethics, and by their decision let him abide". According to the Arthasastra, the king was to see his finance minister the first thing in the morning.

(2) vii. 38 : Constantly the king should show respect to the Brahmanas.

(3) vii. 58 : "To learned Brahmana distinguished among them all, let the king impart his momentous council......".

(4) vii. 59 : "To him (Brahmana), with full confidence, let him (king) entrust all transactions".

(5) vii. 79 : "Let the king make sacrifices...... let him give Brahmanas both legal enjoyment and moderate wealth".

(6) vii. 133 : "A king though with want, must not receive any tax from a Brahmana learned in the Vedas, nor suffer such a Brahmana residing in his territories, to be afflicted with hunger".

(7) vii. 134 : "Of that king, in whose dominion a learned Brahmana is afflicted with hunger, the whole kingdom will in a short time be afflicted with famine".

(8) viii. 1 : "The king should administer justice together with Brahmanas and councillors".

(9) viii. 9 : "When king cannot attend to all let him appoint a Brahmana of eminent learning".

(10) viii. 11: "When three Brahmanas skilled in three Vedas sit together with the learned Brahmanas appointed by the king—it is called a court of Brahma, the creator with four faces".

(12) viii. 21: "Of that king, who stupidly looks on while a Sudra decides cases, the kingdom itself shall be embarrassed like a cow in a deep mire".

(13) viii. 22: "The whole territory which is inhabited by a number of Sudras, overwhelmed with atheists, and deprived of Brahmanas, must specially perish, afflicted with death and disease".

(14) viii. 37: "If a Brahmana finds a hidden treasure he may take the whole of it, since he is the lord of all".

(15) viii. 372 & 374: "Let a Sudra who commits adultery with a woman of twice-born, shall be placed on an iron bed well heated, with fire kept ablaze with logs thrown continuously "till the sinful wretch be burnt to death".

(16) viii. 315: "Let him (king) not, although in great distress, for money provoke Brahmanas to anger by taking their property; for they once enraged could immediately by sacrifice and imprecations destroy him with his troops, elephants, horses and carriages".

(17) ix. 323: "A king had to give all fines collected in his realm to the Brahmanas".

This will indicate the superiority of the Brahmanas and the inferiority of the Sudras, and also the complete subordination of the king to the Brah-

mana heirarchy, when Manavadharma-sastra was written. In the days of Kautilya's Arthasastra, though the king was to rule in consultation with competent councillors, he was not to be dictated by the Brahmanas. The kings were once supreme in the annals of Vedic history. With the downfall of the monarchy the Brahmanas rose to power; but the change was gradual.

In Rajasuya, or the coronation ceremony of the Vedic days the king was god, and Brahmana his servant. The Brahmana in the capacity of the officiating priest used to chant hymns in adoration of the king in such high terms as "Thou art Mitra; thou art Varuna." In those days there were no Kshatriyas; the equivalent of the Varnasrama divisions were Rishis or munis, Rajanyas or kings, and Vis or the common man. In addressing the king as Mitra or Varuna, first it must have been a king of hyperbolic adoration, for which the Hindu poets have been notorious. Then the kings themselves appear to have believed in it, for in a later stage it will be seen that kings assumed such titles. In Volume II it was shown how king Vena appropriated all sacrifices to himself. From Rig Veda IV. 42, it may be seen that Trasadasyu, the son of Purukutsa and the grandson of the great conqueror Mandhatr of Ayodhya says that "I am king Varuna ......I am Varuna and Indra......". At this stage priests must have been submissive to the kings. Then when the Brahmanas of Bharata line became kings themselves, they began to return the compliments by addressing the priests as Indra and Varuna. The next change in relative status will be seen

from Satapatha-Brahmana when the Brahmanas sang :— "O mighty power is he who has been consecrated ; he has become one of you (gods) ; protect him". The implication is evident ; the king derived his godly power consequent on consecration. By whom ? By the Brahmanas. Or, in other words, no consecration, no king. The Brahmanas do the consecration, and one who bestows divinity on another must be divine himself. Thus the Brahmana himself became a god at the final stage as is seen from Manava-dharma Sastra. This could not have taken place in the days of the Mauryas or Guptas, who were non-Brahmanas, and thereby no protege of the Brahmanas. As it was in many other countries, the priests were originally subservient to the kings, then they became equal to the kings, and finally in India they became superior to the kings. This assumption of superiority could not have taken place until the Brahmanas created a new order, as Kshatriya out of the foreign Hunas and aboriginal chiefs. The echo of Kshatriyanisation comes from Mount Abu or Arbela, where Vasista lit the sacrificial fire, from which the Rajputras or sons of Rajas came out fully armed and fully equipped. They must have been fully armed and fully equipped, because they were kings or chiefs even before their Kshatriyanisation ceremony. The Brahman superiority should be considered as commenced from this period, which could not have been earlier than the Huna inroads to India 5th century A. D. But the Brahmanas as well as the Kshatriyas to enhance their prestige have taken the event back to

the days of Parasurama, who is said to have performed this sacrifice to expiate the sin of uprooting the Kshatriya race twenty-one times. The time of Parasurama should be taken as 70 B. A., or about 2,000 B. C. or 1,000 years earlier than the codification of the Vedas by Vyasa. However, there is no mention of the Kshatriyas or Rajputs in the Vedas.

Speaking about the Kshatriyas, Macdonnell and Keith, the authors of the Vedic Index, say that the Kshatriyas belonged to the "old Aryan families who had led the tribes (Aryan) to conquest, as well as the families of the aborigines who had managed to maintain their princely status, in spite of conquest." If there was no Aryan conquest, all the Kshatriyas should logically belong to the aboriginal tribe, or some other source should be found for them. The first distinction between Rajanya and Kshatriya is found in Aitareya Brahmana, where a Rajanya asks a Kshatriya for a place at the sacrifice (deva-yajna). The Guptas or the Gupta-Rajanyas would not have asked for a place at the sacrifice from a Brahmana. They performed horse-sacrifice, at which according to the ancient custom they themselves must have been leaders. Hence the Kshatriya and Brahmana superiority must have commenced after the glorious days of the Guptas.

CHAPTER 7

THE SMRITIS AND CASTE

The caste system is upheld by the orthodox on the authority of the Dharmasastras or Smritis. There are many Smritis, and commentaries on them. Among them, the often quoted one is Manusmriti, and the popular version of it is one by Kulluka, who, according to his own statement was a Brahmana of Virendra tribe, long settled in Gaur, on the banks of the rivar Kosi.

From Kulluka's version it will be seen that this Smriti was given out by Manu to a group of Brahmanas, who approached him for "the sacred laws in their order, as they must be followed by all four castes, and by each of them, in their several degrees, together with the duties of every mixed caste" (M-D : 1.2).

Manu claims himself to be Viraj, who was produced by the male and female halves of the Great Unknown and "who, being desirous of giving birth to a race of men, produced ten lords of created beings, eminent in holiness, Marici, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasistha, Bhrigu, Pracheta and Narada ; they abundant in glory, produced seven other Manus, together with the deities and mansions, and Maharsis or great sages, unlimited in power" (M-D : I. 32, 34, 35, 36). If these claims are all correct Manu, the law-giver, should be God Himself, and His laws should never be disobeyed,

though it may imply no freedom for women and servitude for them all through life.

But in the opinion of many a Pandit, the Law was first made by Brahma himself, in 100,000 verses, and was given to Narada, who made an abridgement of it in 12,000 verses and gave it to Sumati, son of a Bhrigu. If it were so, why Kulluka left out Narada and Brahma in this transaction should require explanation. However, if this version is correct, the Law could not have reached mankind before the days of Narada.

Narada, to all appearance, was a late Rishi. In the Vedas his name cannot be traced. In the epics and folk lores, he is depicted as a flatterer and great mischief-maker, one who was ever ready to praise any one whom he met, whether god, man or demon, and one who was in the habit of carrying tales. His reputation as a mischief-maker must have been very great, for, even now mischief-makers are often called Naradas.

In some Puranas, it is stated that Narada at first was the son of Brahma, and then on being cursed by Daksha, he became the son of Kasyapa. If this statement is not taken literally, it may mean that once he held allegiance to those who worshipped Brahma, and then changed his views and joined the group of Kasyapas, who were not worshippers of Brahma. It was shown in Volume II, that the Brahma worshippers were Atharva Vedis, and the Kasyapas were mainly Rig Vedis. If Narada had any hand in framing any one of the Smritis, he must have done so, when he held allegiance to

Atharva Vedis or Brahma. But Narada, was not satisfied either with the Rig Vedis or Atharva Vedic religion. In chapter seven, Chhandogya Upanishad, it is stated that Narada, who was well learned in all the four Vedas and all the Sastras, went in great grief to Sanatkumara, the great exponent of the doctrine of the Self, and learned from him truth which was the truth of truth. The Self according to this school of the Upanishad was not Brahma, it was the Self within man, which consisted of mind with five pranas or breaths. It was shown in Volume II, that Brahma had no place in their doctrine ; and they even made Indra, the greatest of the Rig Vedic gods, a laughing-stock by sending him out to learn what the Self was. However, this incidence will show that Narada was not quite satisfied with the Vedic religion, and especially with the worship of Brahma.

An explanation, similarly for Daksha's curse may be pieced together from the Puranas. Daksha was a Prajapati, who like Manu the law-giver, desired to given birth to a race of men. The law-giver's father and mother were the male and the female halves of the cosmic force. But Daksha's father and mother were supernatural beings. His fathers were the ten Prachetas, who were born of the earth and sea and who performed severe penance under the water for a thousand years. His mother was a tree nymph called Marisha, who came from the perspiration of another nymph gathered on tree leaves, and who was brought up by the Moon. Daksha married Asikini ; if she was not a human being, she must have been one of the tributaries of

the Indus. Anyway, she was an "eminent supporter of the world", and was devoted to great austerities", and gave birth to five thousand sons. "Beholding them desirous of multiplying the race, the divine ascetic Narada approached them and said —'O ye powerful Hariyasvas, it is evident that you intend multiplying the progeny, you like ignorant people, do not know the middle, the height and the depth of the world; how would you propagate progeny? Your understanding is not hindered by interval, height or depth, why do you not, O fools, behold the end of the universe?" Having heard this, they repaired to various directions and returned not. Daksha, then, produced a second lot of one thousand sons; they were also spirited away by Narada.

It must be on account of this that Daksha cursed Narada to become the son of a Kasyapa. What does it indicate? The so-called sons of Daksha, who were given birth by Asikini, must have been some people on the bank of the river Asikini (the Chinab) who must have been the followers of the religion of Daksha; and Narada, who belonged to a different religion, must have converted them to his way of thought. The difference between Daksha and Narada would appear to have been only a matter of religion. What Narada spoke to the sons or descendants of Daksha is pregnant with such a possibility. For multiplying the progeny one need not know the middle or depth of the world, nor any details about the world or its creation, neither should he behold the ends of the universe. Generally people's attention is drawn

to the end of the universe, death or impermanence of life, only for guiding them through the right path. Presumably he was scoffing at their religion. What was the religion of Daksha or his descendants? It is easier to speculate on the religion of Narada.

From such books as Narada Bhakti Sutra and Narada Pancaratra that are associated with his name, it may be presumed that he was a Vaishnavite, of the 'Bhakti cult' or intense love of god. From the Puranic stories connected with him, it could also be seen that he was a worshipper of Krishna or Vishnu. It was shown in Volume II, that Vaishnavism came to prominence only after Krishna's revolt at Vrindavan, against the Vedic religion of Indra worship, which could not have taken place before 1000 B. C. Hence, it could be presumed that Narada was an Atharva Vedi first, then a Rig Vedi, probably with an inclination towards the secret doctrine of the Upanishads, and finally one who became a Vaishnavite. Among the Kasyapas there were adherents of all these schools. Even among the Rakshasas or demons descended from Kasyapa, great devotees of Vishnu like Prahalada, can be counted.

However, according to the Puranas, Daksha, being foiled by Narada to create a race through 11,000 sons of Asikini, decided to accomplish it through his daughters. He produced not less than sixty daughters; ten of them were given to Dharma thirteen to Kasyapa; twenty-seven to the Moon, (who became the twenty-seven constellations, or lunar mansions), four to Arishtanemi; two to

Bahurupa ; two to Angiras ; and two to Krisava. But the ones who helped him most in the creation of a new race were those thirteen who were given to Kasyapa. The celestials also helped them. All the Vedic gods and great Rishis, assembled together and decided to be reborn as the progenies of Kasyapa. Indra, Varuna, Mitra, Pushan, Aryaman, Vishnu and all took part in it, and all of them were reborn, through these thirteen daughters. The other daughters have also helped a bit, for instance, Bahuputra's wives gave birth to four kings of lightning. The Vedas were reborn through the wives of Angiras, and the celestial weapons were reborn through the wives of Krisava. Then Daksha himself by creating all movable and immovable things, completed the creation of a new race, on similar lines that existed before him, in a previous Manvantara or the duration of a Manu. The names given to the gods and Rishis of this creation is the same as they were in a previous Manvantara. How it happened is also explained in the Puranas. Parasara, the narrator of the story in Vishnu Purana, says that—"these deities take their birth one after the expiry of a thousand Yugas; they are thirty-three in number and their appearance and disappearance is spoken of as birth and death, and these divinities appear and disappear age after age as the sun sets and rises again." Yet there were some even among his audience who did not take everything in. His favourite pupil—

Maitreya asked—"O ! great ascetic, Daksha, as I am informed, was born from the right thumb of Brahma : tell me how he was born again as the

son of Ten prachetas. Another great doubt exists in mind, O Brahmana, that how could he, who was the grandson of Soma, be also his father-in-law ?

Parasara said—"O ! thou of great piety, birth and death are constant in all creatures. Rishis having divine vision do not wonder at it. Daksha and other eminent ascetics take birth in every age and they again cease to be ; the learned are not perplexed by it. O foremost of the twice-born ones, in the days of yore there was neither senior nor junior ; asceticism and spiritual power were the sole causes of being considered as senior."

The cajoling and superior air that exudes from this reply had its desired effect. After thus being satisfied, Maitreya asked for the rest of the story. One cannot wonder how many doubting Toms since then have been made to keep quiet by quoting this passage ! Evidently all these stories have been made out to give prominence to Daksha, and to make him the creator of a new world order.

When has all these taken place ? Fortunately, in the middle of this incredible tale, Vishnu Purana gives a most valuable information. It says that it was at the end of Manu Chakshusa, or at the end of his Manvantar, that the celestials assembled and decided to be reborn as the progeny of Kasyapa, the son-in-law of Daksha. It was shown in Volume II, that there were fourteen Manus, five of them classified as 'past' Manus, two as 'present' and seven as 'future,' and according to Vishnu and Vayu Puranas the 'present' ended with Janamejaya II, and

'future' began after him. It was also shown that Janamejaya II was a direct descendant of Manu Chakshusa. Hence the Manvantara or the period of daksha or Daksha Prajapati, should be considered as commenced from that date, which should not be any earlier than 950 B. C., which is the date of the battle Kurukshetra, during which he was born, This would make Daksha automatically a future Manu.

Among the future Manus, according to Vishnu Purana, there was one Manu called Daksha Savarni, or Daksha in other Puranas. Hence there is no difficulty in recognising Daksha Savarni as Daksha Prajapati.

Now all the qualities attributed to Daksha tallies with those that are given to Manu, the law-giver. Both have taken the place of Brahma, the creator, and both have created gods and the Rishis. Brahma created as shown in Volume II eight Rishis from the sacrificial fire lit by him in the presence of Varuna, and they were Marici, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasistha and Bhrigu. All these were created again by Daksha Prajapati. But Manu the law-giver, in his creation added two more to the list, namely, Pracheta and Narada. According to the Puranas, the fire-born Rishis were not Manu-makers, they were only preceptors of clans descended from Manus. However, the inclusion of Pracheta in the list would appear to have given them a new idea. As Daksa was Pracheta's son, and if one Rishi could be the father of one Manu, why should not all other Rishis too become Manu-makers? Knowing what happened between

Pracheta and Narada, one cannot but feel some surprise at the inclusion of Narada in the list. Did he not spirit away eleven thousand sons of Daksha? The object must have been to include all, friends and foes, in the creation.

Daksha, the 'future' Manu, was a Rig Vedi, for among his sons the name Dhritaketu, and among their preceptors the name of Vasu Medhatithi is also found. Medhatithi was among the hymn-makers of the Rig Veda from the very beginning and when the preceptor is a Rig Vedi, the clientele should also be Rig Vedis. Further it will be seen that a prolific commentary on Manusmriti stand in the name of one Medhatithi, though it may be of a later date.

Then if Dhritaketu is a misprint for Dhristaketu the exact date of the formation of the Manusmriti group or Brahmanas can also be ascertained. Dhristaketu, was the son of Dhristadyumna, the son of Drupada. Doristadyumna killed Drona in the battle of Kurukshetra c. 950 B. C. From Manusmriti itself, it will be seen that at the beginning, the Smriti was applicable only to the Rishi settlers of Brahmavarta; and the home of Dhristaketu was not far from Brahmavarta, if it was not there. Most probably it was Dhristaketu, who gave a patriarchal status to the followers of Manusmriti. He was a prince of Pancala, and it was under the aegis of the princes of North Pancala, that the Rishis colony of Brahmavarta came to existence. Daksha may not have been a real personage, he may have been only a virtual ancestor, like all the Manus were, an Adam of this group.

However, it is abundantly clear that Manu, the law-giver was none other than Daksha, though there is slight variation in their parentage. But the variation is of chronological importance. Daksha, according to the Puranas, is a super-man born of fairies, and that is an early reaction of humanity towards all super-men. The Smriti conception of the law-giver is metaphysical, and as such, it establishes the author's acquaintance with the Sankhya school of Kapila, therefore the Manusmriti should be of a later origin. Even the Puranic story does not appear to be very old. There, the gods are said to have been reincarnated; and reincarnation is a theme not found in the Vedas and appears to have been formulated even by the Buddhists only long after the days of Buddha.

The object of elevating Daksha, the patriarchal head of this religious sect, to the sublime height of the creator of the universe is most obvious. It is to give extreme importance to the clans descended from him, and everything associated with them. By making Manu the creator of the world and receiving the law direct from him, the Brahmanas have given a divine origin to their law. If it were admitted that it was man-made, it could have had no sanctity and most probably it might have been set aside. For the sake of their prestige, nay for sanctity, did they not manipulate the mathematical hymn of Purusha Sukta to prove their primogeniture? Did they not give their supporters most incredible origin from the fire, from the Sun and from the Moon? Others also have received the Laws from the hand of their gods. Does not the king

of Japan still claim descent from the Sun? Many people still believe in such incredible happenings. If the people are prepared to believe them, the framers have not misjudged them. Who should not like to be respected? Mankind have a great weakness to pose as something better than that they are. Even the most civilised and sophisticated are not free from this weakness.

Manusmriti appears to have had many commentaries. The well-known among them are those of Medhathiti, Govind Raja, Dharani Dhara and Kulluka. In the opinion of Sir William Jones the first is prolific and unequal, the second is concise and obscure, and third is often erroneous, and the collation by Kulluka "is the shortest, but most luminous, the least ostentatious, yet most learned, the deepest, yet most agreeable commentary ever composed on any author, ancient or modern, European or Asiatic".

In the opinion of Monier William, the earliest version of Manusmriti does not date before the sixth century B. C. The other commentaries are of much later date; that of Medhatithi's is estimated to be of the ninth century A. D., while that of Kulluka is estimated by Kane as of thirteenth century A. D., and of Govind Raja is estimated by Ashutosh Mukerji as late as the fifteenth century A. D. It will be seen that it was during this period that India suffered most from Mohommadan rule. During the Mohommadan rule, as it was later during the British rule, the Brahmanas had considerable power; though they bent their heads before

the foreign rulers, they ruled the non-Brahmanas, perhaps in a degree which they never did before or after. The non-Brahmanas bore the brunt of the foreign rule, they were the producing class and as such they were subject to extortion, while the Brahmanas grew rich under the patronage and in the service of the oppressors. The struggle for existence must have told much on the producing classes; they may not have had any idea what the Brahmanas were writing during this period. Even if they had known, the Sudras and other working classes had not shown any inclination to draw swords with the Brahmanas. The first substantial stand against the Mohammadans was made on the south of the river Krishna, by the king of Vijayangar, associated with the Hoysala Balladas of Devasamudram, and the Pandyas of Madura. Though all these kings were non-Brahmanas, Vijayanagar came very much under the Brahmana influence. Sayana, one of the prime-ministers of Vijayanagar wrote a commentary on the Rig Veda; his brother, another minister, Madhavacharya (1330-1385) wrote what is known as Parasara-Madhaveya, a commentary on Parasara Smriti. About the eleventh century A. D., Mitakshara Law, a commentary on Yajnavalkya Smriti was written by Vijnesvara, which is considered as the supreme authority all throughout India except in Bengal. It is books like these that have delegated the Sudras to an inferior position and gave supreme superiority to the Brahmanas. How much in each of these books was original and how much was fanciful, and how much was propaganda, is very difficult to ascertain. From

the Puranas that were written in these period the psychology of these gloss writers may well be imagined.

The general impression is that these and similar books have Vedic sanction. But in the Vedas no sanction can be traced. These were written when the Hindus had no political freedom, and the Brahmanas were fighting for privileges in the court of the Mohommadans.

In the Smriti known as Yajnavalkya, which is considered as next in authority to that of Manu, some twenty names of the law-givers are given, and they are :

Manu	Yama	Sankha
Atri	Apastamba	Likhita
Harita	Samvarta	Daksha
Vishnu	Katyayana	Gautama
Yajnavalkya	Brihaspati	Satatapa
Usanas	Parasara	Vasistha
Angiras	Vyasa	

All these law-givers except Apastamba appear to have hailed from North India. Even in Northern India these Laws were not in general application. They appear to have been made for the use of small Brahmana settlements. Vyasa's Law might have had its application only in Nimisar forest. The Laws instituted by Atri and Daksha might have had their application only among those who descended from them, even without any geographical application. So is the case with the Laws of Vasistha and Gautama. The Laws by Vishnu and Harita would suggest a point of interest. Vishnu

is one of the Rishis of a gotra descended from Manu Dharma Savarni, and Harita is one of those who descended from Rudra Savarni. Does it not indicate the limited application of these Laws and comparative insignificance of some of these Manus and their laws in general?

Apastamba appears to have hailed from Andhra, not by any means a country of the Aryans. There were law-givers even outside this group; Baudhayana should be considered as one of the most prominent among them.

Manu-Smriti or the Law of Manu according to the text itself had its original application only in the Rishi settlement that was once between the Sarasvati and Drisadvati, and it may have been first recorded by Medhatithi. How a code of such limited application has become world-wide in India may be seen from the Dharmasastra itself.

M-D : II. 17. "Between two divine rivers Sarasvati and Drisadvati, lies the tract of land, which the sages have named Brahmavarta because it was frequented by Gods.

18. The custom preserved by immemorial tradition in that country, among the *four pure classes*, and the among those which are mixed, is called the approved usage.

19. Kurukshetra, Matsya, Pancala, Kanyakubja, and Surasena or Mathura from the region called Brahmarsi (Desa), distinguished from Brahmavarta.

20. From a Brahmana who was born in that country, let all men on earth learn their several usages.

21. The country which lies between Himavat and Vindhya, to the east of Vinasana, and to the west of Prayag (Allahabad) is celebrated by the title of Madhyadesa, or the central region.

22. As far as the eastern, as far as the western ocean, between the two mountains just mentioned, lies the tract which the wise have named Aryavarta or inhabited by respectable men.

23. That land on which the black antelope naturally grazes, is held fit for the performance of sacrifices ; but the land of the Mlechhas differ widely from this.

24. Let the three first classes invariably dwell in those before mentioned countries, but a Sudra, distressed for sustenance may sojourn wherever he chooses.

25. Thus has been the origin of Law succinctly declared........"

No comment is required to see that Manu Smriti was applicable first only to the Brahmana settlers of Brahmavarta, then to those who settled in Brahmarsi-desa and Madhya-desa or wherever they emigrated to. What was decreed for these Brahmanas was not applicable to the Brahmanas elsewhere, neither was it applicable to the Sudras, there or elsewhere.

It is this wider and wider application of the Law of Manu, which the Europeans appear to designate as the Aryan conquest, and the spreading of the Aryan civilization. What had made the Brahmanas to leave their secluded retreat between the Sarasvati and Drisadavati is not known. Was it due to

economic distress? Or was it due to the drying up of the rivers, to the floods of which they prayed most fervently for protection? With the loss of royal patronage, consequent on the destruction of the North Pancalas by the Kurus, they were to depend entirely on the land, which was made fertile by the silt deposited by the annual floods, in a tract which was sandy and porous. It cannot but have been the drying up of these rivers due to their floods finding out easier ways of escape into the Sutlej, that made these Brahmanas leave their original home and emigrate to less holy lands elsewhere. Their first exodus was to Kurukshetra, Matsya, South Pancala, Kanyakubja and Mathura, all on the banks of the upper Yamuna, Ganga and their tributaries. But wherever they went, they took with them their laws and customs. They met with no opposition from the natives of these lands. The Indians, in ancient days, were a tolerant people; they let the Jews settle down on the Malabar Coast and to practise their religious and social custom without any molestation. They extended the same privileges to the Syrian Christians, and later on to the Parsees, and all, who had to leave their native land and find shelter in India.

Manusmriti gives very valuable information, both sociological and religious. It traces step by step the history of the Brahman supremacy; it shows how they rose from mere indigent mendicants to a priestly heirarchy, not through priestly ministration, but with religious journalism, the type of which history has had no parallel.

Their economic status at the beginning may be seen from the inheritance they left to their sons. According to Usanas, it was goats among the Brahmanas, horses among the Kshatriyas, cows among the Vaisyas and sheep among the Sudras. This shows a very primitive state of existence in the Rishi colonies. They then became rich from the largesse received from the princes and patrons, which included cattle, women and land. But no one could live for ever on the charity of others. Land had to be cultivated, cows had to be tended, and ways and means of livelihood had to be secured. Some had to work, while the head of the family kindled the sacrificial fire and repeated the hymns a hundred or more times at a stretch. They were not celibates ; if they were, they would have lacked in man-power, which they needed badly in their settlements. Large numbers of women given to them as gifts, by kings and potentates, was taken advantage of. Among them there were princesses with maids and maids with pretty daughters. All pretty women were taken in marriage and to them and their sons suitable jobs were allotted, some sons became priests, others became hunters, some became cultivators and others became cattle breeders. First it must have been according to the individual ability and aptitude. Yet some difference was sure to exist between the princely bride and their maids, though both may have filled the bridal bed, and also between their children. The princely sons may have followed princely occupations, while the sons and daughters of the maids must have followed occupations similar to those of their mothers.

The sons of the women who helped the father in tending the fire and in fetching the fuel became the priests or Brahmanas. Stronger sons who helped the father, in hunting wild animals and cutting the heads of sacrificial animals became men of 'Kshatra' or power. The sons who tended the cattle, ploughed the field, sowed the seed, reaped the harvest and disposed the grains became Vaisyas, while such sons, of the maids specially, who stayed at home and did odd jobs became the Sudras. Such distribution of labour even now could be seen in joint families, where even an elder brother may be seen waiting upon a younger, while a son ploughs the field, a cousin may be selling the produce from the land, all without any feeling of ill-will or superiority or inferiority complex.

In the early days it would appear that all wives and their children lived together happily under the same roof, and under the management of the same patriarchal head. These settlements were not hermitages, but they were patriarchal joint families or Gotras. They were different from the Kulas, for, in a Kula, or kuli which is identified by a totem, may contain many gotras or families. What is intended by gotra may be better understood by the Santhali word Gotar, which means whole or unsplit, as a pea for instance. The Gotra equivalent among the Matriarchies is Tara-wad. 'Tara' in Taravad and Gotar stands for a fixed abode, as 'tara' means made-up or built-up ground. The members of each generation of a gotra are considered to be brothers and sisters, however remote may be their common ancestry, and as such they

are not allowed to intermarry. This is the secret of the agitation that is still going on against 'sa-gotra' marriage.

Marriage among them was 'pani-grahana', or getting hold of the bride's hand. This even now is the main part of the Brahmana marriage ceremany, just the same as among the aborigines like the Oraons. Among the aborigines this indicates mutual consent, but among the high caste Hindus, it is more or less a sign of possession, as among them generally the question of individual consent does not arise, for marriages are arranged by the parents, and in many cases the bride and the bride-groom are not allowed to set their eyes on each other before the pani-grahana. However, whether they meet each other or not the bridegroom's pre-rogative, as symbolised in taking hold of the hand is still maintained. This custom of catching hold of the hand may have indicated a personal preference and might have originated from the time when the head of a family had many to choose from.

When the single roof became insufficient to accommodate all the members of a gotra, they divided themselves into two or more groups, and began to live in different homes. In such divisions or grouping, identity of interest and congeniality must have played an important part. This would appear to have been the beginning of 'Varn-asrama' grouping. Then the division of the 'gotra' into families created the problem of effective control. When all lived under the same roof, it could have been easy for the head of the family to distribute work, to see that each one does his job pro-

perly and in every way to control them, as it is done even now in joint-families. But among the families living apart, control could be exerted only by law or rules of conduct. The duties that are prescribed in the Dharma Sastras for respective Varnas are laws of this kind. These rules indicate first of all, division of labour, and secondly specialisation and thirdly the economic use of man-power. The Brahmana's duty, for instance, was specified as "to study, to teach, and to perform sacrifices." Without study, none of the other things can be done. If study needs to be profitable to the community, one should teach others the knowledge he learned. Among the Vedic people, sacrifice was not merely for killing animals for food; it was as well for popularising science, by holding private and public demonstrations, and to revise the memory by ceremonial repetition of the texts. If education was not made compulsory by enforcing Brahmacharyasram, none of the ancient texts may have survived. Hence it will be seen how complementary and supplementary these three duties were delegated to a Brahmana. Even today it is only by devotion to all these three details that one could become proficient in anything. Likewise the other Varnas or groups were also allotted their respective curriculum of duties with the object of making them proficient in their respective spheres. But there was no restriction that one should not do any other work than specified for his order. There was no law which prohibited a Brahmana from sweeping his own floor or cooking his food, or growing his own vegetables, which a Brahmana does even

now. In fact the Brahmana has never allowed any one except a Brahman of his own gotra to cook his food and to perform other intimate duties. Likewise there was no restriction that a Sudra should not learn, teach and do sacrifice. The Sudras and untouchables perform these duties even now, and they even teach the Brahmana boys.

When the work was a matter of personal preference, shirkers were bound to be, as will be found in all joint families. There again rules can only be the remedy, perhaps assisted by punishment. Such rules are also found in Manusmriti. One rule for example :— "Let the Vaisya, having been girt with proper sacred thread, and having married an equal wife be always attentive to his business or agriculture and trade, and to that of keeping cattle; and never must a Vaisya be disposed to say, 'I have no cattle', nor, be being willing to keep them, must they by any means be kept by men of another class. (M-D : IX. 326, 328). The ultimate part of this rule is interesting, inasmuch as it would indicate that among these people there were no Sudras when this rule was made. In later rules, the Sudras were also to keep and tend the cattle, which here is exclusively fixed for the Vaisyas. It is quite possible that there were no Sudras among them at the beginning. The first Sudras among them must have been the unbelieving Bhrisyas from their neighbourhood, on whose misfortune caused by heavy flood in the river Sarasvati, Bharadvaja gloated upon (RV).

Even after the four castes became somewhat distinct and separate, intermarriages among them

would appear to have been usual. Till late in the second century B. C. caste did not stand to in the way of intermarriage. Udayana king of Kausambi had four queens: (1) Vasula-Datta, daughter of king Pajjota of Avanti, (2) Padmavati, daughter of king Ajatasatru of Magadha, (3) Samavati, daughter of Seth Veddavat and an adopted daughter of Seth Ghosita, and (4) Magandiya, daughter of a Brahman from Kururatha country. They were not concubines, they were regular queens. Udayana was a Rajanya (Kshatriya). When Seth Ghosita, a rich merchant, took his adopted daughter handsomely dressed to the court of Udayana, he fell in love with her and married. The Seth must have been a Vaisya. A marriage between a Kshatriya and Vaisya is not allowed today. Udayana respected his Vaisya wife and raised her to the rank of a great queen with 500 attendants. Magandiya, the Brahmana's daughter was very beautiful; her father first offered her to Buddha a non-Brahmana of no caste in marriage, then he offered her to Udayana, who being pleased with her appearance, married her and raised her to the high status of a queen with 500 attendants. Today the Brahman girl, who marries a Kshatriya invariably becomes an outcaste, and in certain places where Brahmanism is still flourishing in its former glory, she will automatically become a 'mlechha' or an untouchable and unapproachable even to the lowest of the Sudras. King Bimbisara of Magadha has in addition to his two queens from the royal families of Avanti and Madra, a third queen a Brahmana lady of the Lichchhavi clan, who

became the mother of king Ajatasatru. Asoka was a Sudra, being descended from the Nandas, yet one of his queens was a Vaisya, daughter of Sangamitta, a merchant of Vidisa. The discontinuance of intermarriages, as is prevalent today must be of a later development.

The offsprings from intermarriages suffered no disadvantages or disabilities. Jataka stories give instances of offsprings from 'irregular' marriages ranking as nobles (Kshatriyas) as well as Brahmanas. The intermarriage between the different castes was not concubinage. Even according to Manusmriti, it was legalised, and the issues, from such marriages, had the right of inheritance. Manu says if a Brahmana had four wives one from each of the four castes, and a son from each, the Brahmana son was to get only two-fifths of the property, the rest had to be distributed in the ratio of three-tenths to the Kshatriya, one-fifth to Vaisya and one-tenth to the Sudra, probably in consideration of their respective earning capacity. The law being such, if a Brahmana had a son only through his Sudra wife, the whole of his property should go to the Sudra son. From Kautilya's Arthasastra it will be seen that this law continued to be in force till the Mauryan period. But later additions in Manusmriti will show that the Sudra son's share was reduced to mere maintenance. One sided intercaste marriages as specified in Manusmriti still exists on the Malabar Coast, where a Brahmana may marry a Kshatriya or Sudra woman and a Kshatriya may marry a Sudra woman. There were no Vaisyas on the Malabar Coast, and those

who functioned as Vaisyas were lower than the Sudras. The question of inheritance did not arise there as the Kshatriyas and Sudras were Matriarchies, or those who did not depend on their father's property.

The marriage among the Kshatriyas and the Sudras of the Malabar coast has been purely a social affair with no kind of religious ceremony attached to it. When the bride accepts a token of marriage from the bridegroom, in the presence of a few assembled elders, it becomes a legally solemnised marriage. When a Brahmana marries a Brahmana woman, it is a sacrament, accompanied with religious rites. According to Manu-smriti all intermarriages were sacramental. Manavadharmasastra III. 43 says that when a Brahmana takes a Brahmana woman for his wife they should clasp their hands, when he takes a Kshatriya wife, she should hold an arrow in her hand, when he takes a Vaisya wife she should hold a whip in her hand, and when he marries a Sudra wife, "she must hold the skirt or a mantle". The symbol of Kshatriya and Sudra marriage on the Malabar coast is the acceptance of a set of wearing apparel by the bride from the bridegroom; hence it is in line with the provisions of the Manusmriti.

The Brahmana's extreme concern to have a son is to have some one to do obsequies for him after his death, and his anxiety in the matter is reflected in the legal sanction for a widow to get a son by a brother of the deceased husband or by any other cognate relative. The ancestors of

the Matriarchies seem to have been satisfied with such services from their sisters' children, male or female, especially from those who were to inherit their property.

Manusmriti shows different stages in the development of the law of inheritance. First the Brahmana son's share was goats and the Sudra son's share was sheep, the law at that time would appear to have been in favour of the Sudra. Then it changed, the Brahmana son began to get more, probably as he was not a producing member of the family, and the Sudra son get the least as he was the best of the producing sons. The final stages in the evolution of the law of inheritance may be seen from Manava-dharma sastra IX. 154 and 155 :—

> "Whether a Brahmana have sons, or have no sons, by wives of the three first classes, no more than a tenth must be given to the son of a Sudra wife" (154).

> "The son of a Brahmana Kshatriya, or Vaisya by a woman of the servile class shall inherit no part of the estate, unless he be virtuous; nor jointly with other sons, unless his mother was lawfully married; whatever his father may give him, let that be his own" (155).

In the early stages where the Brahmana wife and the non-Brahmana wives lived together under the same roof, the sons from all the wives received education from the Brahmana father. There was no restriction that the Sudra should not learn the Vedas. Had it not been so, the provision in Manava-

dharma-sastra : II : 238 and 241 will be impossible to be explained. There it is stated that a Brahmana could learn the Vedas even from a Sudra. If the Sudras were not allowed to learn the Veda, no Brahmana would have been able to learn it from them. The Brahmanas are still learning from Sudras. In Travancore, the youngsters of the highest and the most orthodox of the Brahmana families often receive their general education from the Sudras and they invariably learn astronomy and medicine even from the untouchables and unapproachables.

It was later in history the law was changed that a Sudra was not allowed to have the Veda, and a Brahmana was not allowed to read it in the presence of a Sudra and it became sacriligeous for him to listen to it while being read by a Brahmana. The Sudra was not allowed to have any religeous rites. The hope that was held out for his salvation was service : "servile attendance on Brahmanas learned in the Vedas" which was to lead him to the future beatitude of being reincarnated as a twice-born after many a rebirth. First he was to serve only the Brahmanas learned in the Vedas ; then as every Brahmana was supposed to know the Vedas, the Sudra was to serve them all. Why ! the Brahmana was not allowed to "give even temporal advice to a Sudra" (M-D: IV.80). If this latter injunction had been followed, many a Brahmana lawyer who swears by the Smritis, would now have been financially worse off.

Is there any wonder that millions of self-respecting 'Sudras' or unbelievers retreated to mountain

fastnesses and jungles and preferred to lead the life of aborigines in preference to a distant prospect or spiritual beatitude to be derived from the humble service and adoration to the Brahmanas? Every aboriginal tribe still maintains traditions of their being once in fertile plains of India before their migration to the mountain fastness. The Munda tradition shows that they were once round about Mathura and Agra, and took a leading part in the battle of Kurukshetra, by fighting under the banner of Brhadbala, the king of Ayodhya, though against the popular Pandavas. It was not the Aryan invasion which made them take refuge in the jungles, but it was before the Aryan religion they retreated, the acceptance of which even now they resist.

The Brahmanas of Manu-Smriti would appear to have been much less worshippers of the Rig Vedic gods, than one is made to understand. According to the Smriti, the gods or goddesses, the Brahmana were to make daily oblation were Agni (the fire god), the Moon, Prajapati, Dyava (the sky), Prithivi (the earth), and the goddesses Dhanvantari (of Medicine), Kuhu and Anumati (two phases of the Moon). It was already shown in Volume I that Kuhu and Anumati were the Atharva Vedic gods. The absence of Indra, Varuna and other gods of the Rig Vedic fame in the list, cannot but create a suspicion that the Brahmanas for whom the Manu-Smriti was intended were less Rig Vedic and probably more Atharva Vedic minded.

The Smritis were not the only Laws that were applicable to the Brahmanas. It was not necessary for a judge to decide a Brahmana's case entirely according to the Smritis. The Brihaspati Smriti speaks of four kinds of Law, Dharma, Vyavahara, Charita and Rajasana. Dharma refers to the law of their original settlement or mother hermitage. The others refer to the Laws of their new homes or places of emigration. Vyavahara is the Civil Law and Charita refers to the custom of the locality, while Rajasanas are ordinances of the realm. In the administration of justice all these were taken into consideration. By the application of any of them, it was permissible to set aside any ruling of the Smritis. Even Manu says that Charita or "custom decided everything and overrules the sacred Laws", Yajnavalkya says that "one should not practice that which, though admitted by the Smriti, is condemned by the people." Brihaspati says that "the time-honoured institutions of caste and family should be preserved." By Rajasanas or ordinances even today, all usual or constitutional laws are overridden. Thus whatever might have been the unjust laws made and preserved by the Brahmanas in their Dharma-sastras, their application was limited and a judge could have decided cases according to the customary laws of the clients, or laws of the state. But the Brahmanas soon made provision for such contingencies. First by making it obligatory on kings to abide by the decisions that the Brahmanas would give (M-D. VII. to 59). Secondly by not giving the Sudra a chance to decide the case (M-D. VIII. 21).

The Europeans like Abbe Dubois, have shown great surprise at the acquiescence of the Indian masses in Brahman-made laws; but they do not realise that the Smritis were not of universal application. It is very doubtful whether they ever received as much attention as they received during the British administration. The Smritis came to life again as the result of a desire on the part of Warren Hastings to rule the Hindus according to their own laws. If Sir William Jones had not translated the gloss of Kulluka into English in 1796, and Mayne had not made a compendium of Hindu Law in 1878, many a Brahman lawyer and legislator of today may not have known hat wthe Smritis contained.

The Smritis are full of contradictions. "The most probable explanation", says Mayne, "appears to be that they were not from the beginning of universal application throughout Hindu India, but with the exception of Manu-Smriti, were much circumscribed in their local application, or expressed the views of the particular school to which they belonged. Another inference is reasonably plain that some Smritis modified their rule to provide for later usages and altered conditions; other Smritis repeated the previous rules which have become obsolete side by side with later rules". However, the apparent contradictions and additions in the Smritis need not detract their historic value. The Smriti rules were not all manipulations. But they had their application only for particular groups in particular places and at particular periods. They began with small groups of people, in com-

munities with no restriction of caste, and with one religion. First the sacerdotal requirements made a cleavage among them as priests and non-priests. The priests or Brahmanas specialised in religion while the common man or the Vis, or Vaisyas specialised in agriculture and trade. Such distinctions have taken place everywhere in human groups. Then it was found that some had to rule, while others of necessity should obey, which laid the foundation of the third group, the Rajanyas. Then when they came into contact with non-believers, or people with different gods and different forms of worship, a fourth group called Sudras appeared among them. But at the beginning all four groups lived together amicably with intermarriages, probably with no restrictions whatsoever. Then the multiplication of trade and profession created further distinctions, and different interests. The men in authority made rules to safeguard their interests, which as it often happens, affected adversely those who were not in power. This may have continued for centuries. The Smritis as their names indicate, still preserve what is remembered of them.

The calligraphists and gloss writers, who wrote and rewrote the Smritis time after time were the Brahmanas ; some may mis-read the original, while others may have made additions and alterations as warranted by the circumstances. It was the work of man ; and as such personal interests or the interests of the community to which he belonged could not but have weighed heavily in their composition. The Brahmanas ascribe a divine origin

to the Smritis, but every knowledge in primitive days was ascribed to gods or semi-divine beings. The divine origin given to these books has not been without its advantages; for it was the fear of divinity that made them preserve the old usages along with the new ones. Though the Smritis were many, the contents of them had never gone beyond a few learned ones even among the Brahmanas. To the non-Brahmanas even the names of these books were not known until the Europeans had them translated into English.

The respect given to Brahmanas was mainly due to their learning. It was not on account of their ministration to the public as priests. The Brahmana's superiority in learning was due to their excellent system of compulsory education. The compulsory education was enforced by religion, and maintained by the traditional laws or custom of the community. A Brahman boy, rich or poor, had to start his education at the age of five, or latest at seven. The compulsory period may extend up to the age of 21, or until the time of his marriage, which should not be less than 18 years. At the age of nine after passing through the ceremony of Upanayana he should commence his studies seriously. From this stage onward the student had to undergo a rigorous life of abstinence, service and learning. Education was least expensive, for the student had to beg for his food, sleep on the floor, wear only garments made of rough skins, avoid the use of an umbrella, eat no rich food, and have no luxuries of any kind, etc., etc. The Brahmana is said to have three births. The first is the

real birth from his mother's womb. The second with the investiture of a grass zone indicating his entry in to the field of education; and the third with the investiture of the sacred cotton-thread indicating that he was at full liberty to study the Vedas, Sastras, Science and so forth. If he preferred to be a bachelor and desired to become learned and wise, he should continue his studies till the age of forty-one. It was with the object of making the education compulsory, that Varnasrama system was first introduced. In the compulsory period of education, one was designated as a Brahmachari, who was to concentrate on education to acquire knowledge, with a chastened mind, devoid of desires and passions, and a life dedicated to service. Marriage or womanization during this period was strictly prohibited, so as to avoid all distractions and to concentrate the entire thought on study. This period was to be followed by a period of intense married life, procreating children and serving the community in all possible ways. This period was called Grahastnasrama. Then if the desire for knowledge still persisted, he may enter on Vanaprastha and Sanyasa Asramas in succession and attain the greatest possible spiritual attainment over and above all worldly wisdom. Such a division of life into study, labour, rest and attainment was not only for the Brahmanas, it was prescribed for all, though exigencies of life made it impossible for every one to pursue. Even a Sudra king like Chandra Gupta Maurya followed this precept.

The general impression is that the Brahmanas were the only learned class among the Hindus;

this does not appear to be correct. The Silpis or the Hindu craftsmen for instance, though often they are non-Brahmanas and more often untouchables, were great in scholarship. As the Brahmanas became the custodians of religion, the Silpis became custodians of Science, and Art. The study of Sanskrit is essential for them even today, if they are to do functions efficiently. The Brahmanas very seldom interested themselves in the study of Art and Science, though they have produced many men of eminence in these lines. On the Malabar Coast, which can truly be designated as a museum of India's historical and traditional past, the best educated men, in Hindu style, are found among the untouchable. The Kanyan, who is sometimes called Eluthachchhan, or father of letters, is the repository of ancient science of mathematics, astrology and medicine. Many a classical book in Malayalam, including the epic of Mahabharata, Bhagavata, and Ramayana stand in the name of Tunchath Eluthachchhan. The Silpasastras or books on Art, and architecture are in the custody of another class of untouchables called 'Acaries'. Instances like these may well indicate that the Brahmana never had the exclusive right of learning, they were not the only learned caste and their exclusive claim if any was confined to the Vedic literature, which they themselves made a sealed book not only to the Sudras but to the Kshtriyas as well.

The respect given to Brahmanas are explained in two ways, the western and the eastern way. The western conception is that the Brahmanas repre-

sent the true Aryan and the Aryan culture, and it is due to their Aryan lineage that they are respected. If there were no Aryan invasion, the respect based on racial superiority will have no validity. The eastern claim for superiority is based on their primogeniture of being born from the mouth of Brahma, the creator. Even a school boy today will not give any credulance to this presumption. All the same the Brahmanas are respected everywhere, and by all. What can this be due to? The secret of this is given in Manusmriti itself; for they possess the Veda. The Vedas are sealed books for 90 per cent of the Hindus even today. What do the Vedas stand for? They stand for mystic rites, incantations, though not far removed from sorcery, beneficial and harmful. Men have always been afraid of sorcery. All criticism of sorcery even today is based on the unexpressed fear latent in the mind of man through centuries of fear of the unknown and unexplainable. No nation is free from this. But in India it is still afresh due to miraculous powers attributed to holy men. The Yogis are alleged to have super-human powers of doing the impossible and imprecating curses when enraged, and giving boons when they are pleased. Even the most educated Hindu today at the sight of a man in the yogi garb or make-up forgets his science and common sense, and hastens to placate him. The cult of Yogi is supposed to have its root in the Vedas; and the Brahmanas are the only ones who know the Vedas. Hence the Brahmana is respected. How is one to know whether a particular

Brahmana possessed these Yogic qualities or not? The safe way is to respect them all. So the common man endeavours to propitiate them and respect them all. A Brahmana, if he condescends to enter a non-Brahmana's house, is always respected; he should not sit on the floor, if his bottom touches the floor, the house and home will be ruined ; so they hasten to him with a 'pidha', or seat. Whatever the Brahmana has to say should be listened to with respect, the non-Brahmana should never be arrogant in his presence, he should be submissive and mild of speech, and should address him with veneration by using only the customary words and phrases. Hence the respect due to the Brahmana is based on the fear that he is a man of magic, one who is in direct contact with Brahma, the supreme, and one who is endowed with the power of curse and imprecations. However, the caste system or Jati is not based on this fear.

CHAPTER 8

THE TOTEMIC ORIGIN OF JATI (CASTE)

Caste is maintained by two prohibitions ; one on interdining and the other on intermarriage. If one can trace the history and development of restrictions in these two respects, both the origin and the development of caste will be revealed.

In every Hindu home, the kitchen is the most sacred and prohibited place. It is in the kitchen that the caste is most scrupulously observed. A person belonging tc an inferior caste is not allowed in the kitchen of a superior caste. When the inferiority is not established and superiority is not accepted, either party is debarred from entering into each other's kitchen. The kitchen is the place where the food is cooked, and invariably where it is eaten. The kitchen need not be a building, nor even a room. It can be in the open, and it may be on the road-side. Wherever it might be, a few square feet of ground designated as the kitchen consecrated as such is most exclusive. Even a Brahmana, or a close relative may not be admitted into many a kitchen. All Brahmanas have no freedom of entry into each other's kitchen. Certain non-Brahmanas, and even Sudras, will not allow some class of Brahmanas to enter their kitchen. During the war in camps and battlefields, separate kitchens were maintained for different castes ; unintentional entry of a superior officer into a caste-kitchen had always been a cause of complaint.

If caste were an imposition by the conquering Aryan, every Brahmana ought to get admission to a Sudra's kitchen. Entry into the kitchen by an unauthorised person creates many difficulties and unnecessary expenditure. All the food in the kitchen has to be thrown away, all the earthen utensils have to be broken up, metal utensils have to be scrubbed and repolished, and prescribed purificatory rites have to be performed. Why should all these things be done? It is the custom, but even the custom must have a beginning.

The genesis of this custom may be traced back to the aborigines. There is an aboriginal tribe called Kharias in certain parts of Bihar and Orissa. Among them there is a curious custom, that the married daughters will not be allowed to enter their own mother's kitchen. They give no explanation to this except that it was the custom of their forefathers. But its origin may be traced to 'Totem' taboo. Every clan or 'Kulli' has a totem. The totem may be an animal, bird, fish, grain or vegetable. Whatever it might be they venerate and care for their respective totems. They have flags with the images of totem on them and they have images of totem carved out in wood. They are invariably kept in 'dhumkudia', which is a meeting hall for elders, residences for occasional visitors, and a permanent dormitory for the boys and girls. These flags and images are exhibited at their tribal functions and carried about in their periodical 'Yatras' or hunts. The division of the tribes into totem clans was originally intended for the purpose of caring and multiplying the

totem animal or vegetable for the good of the community, or to ensure the continuance of food supply for the tribe, and as such it was the duty of the respective clans to cherish them. The aborigines cherish and worship their respective totem. They are not allowed to eat their respective totem, though they do not stand in way of others eating them. The genesis of both the kitchen and interdining taboos could be traced back to this aboriginal custom, based on their social economy.

Consider the instance of a clan with the tortoise as their totem, and another clan with the peacock as their totem. The tortoise clan will not eat the meat of tortoise; and the peacock clan will not eat the meat of the peacock. There is no restriction among them, that a girl of the tortoise clan should not marry a boy of the peacock clan; the only restriction among them is that a man of the tortoise clan should not marry a woman of the same clan, and a man of the peacock clan should not marry a girl of the same clan. But when a woman of the tortoise clan marries a man of the peacock clan, she automatically becomes a woman of the peacock clan, and she should never after eat the meat of the peacock, though she is privileged to eat the meat of the tortoise. But a person who eats the tortoise is always under a ban with those who care and venerate the tortoise. Hence it is but natural for them to keep away from both the active and potential eaters of the tortoise though one might be a nee-daughter. The same with all other totemists.

Then, the kitchen has another aspect. It is where the aborigines worship their ancestors. No

aborigine eats his food nor does he drink the rice-beer without offering it first to his ancestor spirits. Kitchen is their eating place. Some even have a special corner in their kitchen where they throw a bit of food and a few drops of beer for their departed ancestors, and as such it will not be allowed to be defiled by those who do not observe the totem taboo of their ancestors. A man's totem, just like the Gotra of a Brahmana, is that of his ancestors; one cannot adopt a new totem, one has to be born in it. One cannot give it up without incurring the displeasure of his ancestors, dead or alive. The dead are more feared than the living. Thus the kitchen became a place of sacredness as well as seclusion.

The Brahmanas also worship their ancestors daily in the kitchen, or in its precincts. Hence the kitchen is sacred to the Brahmanas and to the aborigines in the same way. The Brahmanas are to give oblations every day to their ancestors. If it is not done, their pitrus or ancestor spirits will go hungry and curse them, which would cause illness, loss of wealth and perdition. Hence the aborigines as well as the Brahmanas will not allow a day or festival to pass without the worship of their ancestors.

The aborigines method of pitru-worship is not much different from that of the Brahmana. The hymns or the Mantras to be sung on these occasions are practically the same. One hymn which the Oraons use at their Sarhul festival runs on these lines :—

"O! Ancestor-spirits (addressing them by their names), today the Sarhul is being celebrated,

O! Men and women (spirits) ! do eat and drink.

O! Ancestors, don't be offended with paternal and maternal Aunts and maternal Uncles ; with our freinds and ancestors, with those living this side of the river, or on the other side".

.........(Translation by S. C. Roy).

While singing this loud, like the 'Ricas' of the Rig Veda, the Mahato, the pan-bhora or the right hand man of the Pahan, the king-priest, drops the rice beer on the ground as an oblation to the spirits. The Brahmanas also name their ancestors, father, grand-father and great grand-father, in giving them their respective oblations. The Brahmanas would appear to have left out their female relations entirely. Perhaps this might have happened since they denied independence to their women, and to be dependent always on men. But like the aborigines they give oblations often to maternal Uncles. The maternal Uncle plays an important part both in aborigine and Brahmana marriage rites, perhaps a lingering practice of the Matriarchy days. The aborigines believe that the spirits on these occasions come and perch on the thatch of their roof. In Vedic hymns, they are invoked to come and sit on strewn grass. Cowdung, and grass of different kinds such as Darbha, Kusa and Karuka play a prominent part in pitru-kriya, though Darbha is not mentioned in the Manu-Smriti. To ingratiate themselves in the good books of the ancestors, the Brahmanas often give out the name of the person who performs the rites ; but

the Oraons go a step further and say who pays for the rice-beer that he offers. The Oraons offer cooked meat to their ancestor spirits, like the Brahmanas of the Manu-Smriti period. The Brahmanas like all other Hindus offer regular meals to their ancestor spirits through the medium of a third person. This third person should not be a cognate relation, but one of equal rank in the 'Jati' with whose family intermarriage is permissible. The third person eats a hearty meal with all the provisions prescribed for the purpose. According to Manava-Dharmsastra : III. 224, this diet should contain rice, milk, curds, ghi, honey, pudding, vegetables, fruit, savory meats, and sweet smelling drinks; and the person who is specially invited for eating this meal, in case of Brahmanas should be one well-versed in the Vedas, though he is prohibited from reciting the Vedic hymns from the time of receiving the invitation till the Sradha, or the eating of the food on behalf of the spirits is done. This may indicate that Sradha is a pre-Vedic ceremony.

This passage from Manava-Dharmasastra may be disconcerting to many a vegetarian Brahmana. But according to the Dharmasastra, meat was a legitimate food for the Brahmanas. The food declared to be lawful to the Brahmanas and other twice-born classes by the Law-giver Manu were hedgehogs, porcupines, lizards, godhas, gandhacas, tortoises, rabbits, hares and all quadrupeds, with the exception of camels (M-D : V.18) ; while the forbidden food was garlic, onions, leeks, mushrooms, tame hogs, town cocks and carnivorous

birds (M-D: V. 5,11, 18 and 19). The same authority specifies the food that would satisfy the spirits of the ancestors in terms of the months of their satisfaction thus : tila (gingly), rice, barley, black lentils will satisfy them for a period of one month; fish for two months, venison for three months, mutton for four months, birds for five months, kids for six months, spotted deer for seven months, antelope for eight months, rura for nine months, wild bears and buffalo for ten months, rabbits and tortoise for eleven months and long-eared rhinoceros for twelve months. Now many Brahmanas do not use meat at their 'pitru-kriya'; and it may be on account of this that they are performing pitru-kriya every month on new-moon days, with the articles specified for giving satisfaction for a month only.

The Smriti reaction to meat-eating may be seen from the following passage from the Manava-Dharmasastra :

M-D : V. 28 : "For the substance of the vital spirit ; Brahma created all the animal and vegetable system ; and all that is movable and immovable, that spirit devours".

M-D : V. 30 : "He who eats according to the law commits no sin, even though every day he tastes the flesh of such animals, as may lawfully be tasted ; since both animals, who may be eaten, and those who eat them, were equally created by Brahma".

Despite these clear rulings it appears that there was some hesitation on the part of certain Brahmanas to eat meat. For, Manava-Dharmasastra V. 28, enforces the meat-eating in the following

terms— "the Brahmana, engaged in holy rites according to the law refuses to eat it (the lawful meat), shall sink in another world for twenty-one births to the fate of a beast".

The Vedic Rishis appear to have been experts in meat preparations. Atharva Veda hymns Bk: IX. 4, by Rishi Brahman, gives a splendid recipe for mutton 'pillaw', which may perhaps put even the best Mohammadan cook to shame. Therein it is stated how the goat should be brought in after a food-wash, how the slaughter should be done, how it should be skinned limb per limb, and how the meat should be cut joint-wise without being 'hostile' to the flesh or bones ; then how the primary cooking is to be done in a metallic pot of boiling water, while probably hymns were to be sung to fix the time of boiling, and then how the boiled meat is to be taken out and made into a nice rice dish with floating ghi and honey, and finally to be flavoured with dripping Soma liquor. The reward for offering such a dish to the gods was to secure a second husband for a widow and to avoid separation from him even after death. The hymn contains some instructions as to the best way of eating as well, such as sucking the marrow out of the bones without breaking them. Certainly they were connoisseurs in meat-eating. Then there is the hymn. Atharva Veda X. 9, in which the cow's meat was to be made into a pillaw and offered to the gods first, and then to feed one hundred people. The benefit of this was also twofold, first, to secure the fulfilment of one's desires, by virtue of

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gratifying the priests (rtviks), and secondly to ensure an assured progress along the heavenly road. If the Brahmanas have read this, would they be so harsh on the poor meat-eaters of to-day ?

It appears that it was from the days of Asoka Maurya that the restrictions on meet-eating had been imposed. First he imposed restrictions in his palace, and then in his realm. One of his edicts reads that "no animal should here in the royal household be immolated and offered as sacrifices. Formerly in the kitchin of king Priyadasin (Asoka) many hundreds of thousands of animals were every day slaughtered for curry. But now when this Dhamma-lipti (edict) was written only three were being killed for curry, namely, two peacocks and one deer, but even the deer not regularly. Even these three animals will not be killed". Another edict says that "meritorious is the abstention from the slaughter of animals". Though Asoka's intention was to introduce complete prohibition of the slaughter of animals, he appears to have only introduced restrictions. He declared certain birds and animals "unworthy" of slaughter, such as parrots, ruddy geese, swans, skates, tortoises, porcupines, squirrels, stags, set free bulls, rhinoceros, grey doves, village pigeons, and all quadrupeds which are neither used nor eaten ; but he prohibited the *killing of all animals and fish on certain days* : The first and last day of every fortnight and on every full-moon and new-moon days, and on all fast days. These prohibition days may have come up to 56 days in the year.

Asoka's prohibitions must have been most an-

noying to the Brahmanas' 'and their 'pitrus'. Perhaps the Hindu transubstantiation might have dated from this period. The Hindu transubstantiation is the mental conversion of water into wine, and rice into meat, while offering them to the spirits, a practice which is still followed by some high and orthodox Brahmanas.

By what means Asoka enforced these prohibitions is not clear. Was it only by edicts, or by punishment? However, these edicts must have been most unpopular, as they interfered with a person's liberty in choosing what he should eat and drink. Until Asoka's time, there do not appear to have been any restrictions imposed in these respects. Certainly in his grandfather's time no such restrictions were in force. Chandra Gupta's policy had been to restrict the indiscriminate slaughter of animals, and stop drunkenness, both through state control. In his time according to the Arthasastra, there were state-appointed superintendents of liquor who had the power of controlling its production and sale. Only persons of reputable character were allowed to take liquor out of the shops, but for the general public there were drinking saloons even with private apartment fitted up with seats and beds and provided with perfumes and flowers, but the spies were invariably there to watch that none did drink too much, and none should spend beyond his or her means. The drinks supplied in these saloons included medhaka, 'prasanna', 'arista', 'maireya' and 'madhu'. Medhaka stood in place of beer, and rice was its chief ingredient. Prasanna stood in place of whisky or

brandy as it was from wheat and barley they were distilled. Aristas were of several kinds and they stood in place of liquor of today. Maireyas were punches of various kinds and it was from India that punch penetrated to the western countries. Asvas were of three qualities, and their main ingredients being sugar, they should stand in place of rums. Madhu is wine prepared from grapes and other fruits. Even the common mango fruit was not wasted or uneconomically spent as it is today, as from it a liquor called Mahasura was prepared. How common the drinking habit was in those days may be seen from the fact that the people were given special permission to manufacture Svet-asura, a kind of white liquor for special occasions, such as festivals, Samajs (entertainments) and pilgrimages (K. A. : *120,121*).

Asoka, not only interfered with the 'eats and drinks' of the people but he also interfered with their enjoyments. From one of his early edicts it will be seen that he prohibited all 'samajs', or collection of people. for the purpose of enjoyment. The Samajs would appear to have been like the cabaret restaurants of Europe or America, where the public had the opportunity of getting dainty dishes, variety of drinks, and being entertained with dancing, singing, wrestling and other performances. It might be on the abolition of such public entertainment that the ancestors of the present-day aborigines retired to mountain fastnesses to lead a life of their choice.

Asoka's puritanism appears to have been the primary cause of the downfall of the Mauryan

empire. But the Sunga king Pushyamitra of Bhardvaja Gotra of the Vedic Rishis would appear to have removed at any rate some of these prohibitions. By one of the early edicts of Asoka, he prohibited the immolation of the animals at sacrifices ; but the Sunga kings and other Brahmana kings after them revived the 'horse sacrifice', which entailed the immolation of many hundreds of animals every day and at least for a year. It is surprising to see even the Jain emperor Chandra-Gupta Maurya did not take any step in the prohibition of animal slaughter. Perhaps the Jain respect for the sanctity of animal life may have been of a later origin. It would appear to have come with the theory of transmigration of souls.

There were 24 famous Jain saints beginning from Adinatha and ending with Mahavira. All these saints had their 'chihnas' or cognisances. Out of these 24, fifteen of them had animals or birds as their 'Chihna'. Adinatha, the first saint, had a bull for his Chihna, the secend saint, Ajitanatha had an elephant for his Chihna, the third saint, Sayambhava, a horse ; the fourth saint, Abhinananda, an ape ; the fifth saint, Sumatinath, a curlew ; the 9th, 11th, 14th, 16th, 17th, 20th and 23rd, had crocodile, rhinoceros, boar, falcon, antelope, goat, tortoise and serpent respectively for their chihnas ; while the last of the great saints, Mahavira or Vardhamana, had a lion for his cognisance. If these animals were respected and worshipped as the aborigines had done with their totem animals, the Jains or the followers of these saints must have abstained from eating the flesh of these animals

and birds. This most probably had been the origin of the respect for animal life and vegetarianism in India. Even today the Jains are strict vegetarians. The Jains are spread all over the country as commercial and business men ; they do not take to agriculture for fear of hurting or killing land insects. It will be interesting to note that South India, which was the last stronghold of Jainism, is most vegetarian and Brahmanas there as well as many high class Sudras completely abstain from any kind of animal or non-vegetarian diet. A good many of the Brahmanas in the south appear to have been reconverted Jains.

The caste system appears to have been intensified by vegetarianism even among the Brahmanas. In the North, vegetarianism has multiplied the caste. There are two sections among the Kanyakubjas, one meat-eaters and the other strict vegetarians ; the same in non-Brahmana communities. As the diet restrictions increased the number of clans among the aborigines, it has increased the number of castes among the high caste Hindus. Kashmiri Brahmanas eat fish and meat. The Konkan Brahmanas, though they classify themselves as Sarasvatas like the Kashmiri Brahmanas, avoid meat. The Gujrati and South Indian Brahmanas are strict vegetarians, but the Bengali Brahmana eats fish daily and meat on special occasions after it has been dedicated to the goddess.

The Hindu gods, like the Jain saints have their Chihnas or Vahanas. Vahanas are literally conveyances ; but some of the Vahanas given to the gods are not capable of carrying even a new-

born babe. The lion of Devi may carry her, the peacock of Skanda, the warlord, cannot carry even a child on its back. Its absurdity may well be apparent, if the elephant-headed god, Ganapathi, were to ride on his Vahana, the mouse. The Brahmanas even today are found using flags like the totem flags of the aborigines. At the sacred bathing ghats all over northern India, flags of this type are conspicuously exhibited to attract the attention of the clientele by Pandas or Brahmana priests.

Hence in the absence of any other evidence, it can be safely stated that Jati or caste originated with the totem and maintained by prohibitions on interdining and intermarriage. Ancestor worship is its foundation, it is nurtured in the kitchen, and it is by these that caste is still maintained. Even now some Brahmanas, just like the aborigines, do not allow free access to their married daughters into their mother's kitchen. Parents and near relations of the bride will not eat the food prepared by the bride in her kitchen. Milleniums of cultural development have not changed this aboriginal custom ; if any, it has only been aggravated.

The Brahmanas and other higher class Hindus impose marriage restrictions even in their own community ; though the restrictions that they stand by is called Gotra, it is the same as the totem taboo, which is appearing in a different name. Gotra names are irrespective of caste , in Gotras like Kashyapa there are Brahmanas and non-Brahmanas. There are even members of the despised sweeper caste in Maharashtra, who go about under

the gotra names of their Brahmana masters. If caste is an evil, it cannot be remedied by 'sudhi', or Hindu proselytisation or by making the depressed and untouchable class to repeat Gayatri or 'ram ram' nor even by depriving them of their meat diet and toddy drinks. For, caste is not based on any of these. Caste is based on the inherited totem restrictions on interdining and intermarriage. Unless these taboos are removed, caste will ever remain. When the Brahmanas throw open their kitchen to others and when the depressed classes and untouchables follow their lead, without fear of offending their ancestral spirits, then only will caste begin to vanish.

CHAPTER 9

THE RACIAL ELEMENTS IN INDIA

From the latest books on caste, it will be seen that the social anthropologists have divided the racial elements in India as (1) Negritos, (2) Proto-Australoids or Pre-Dravidians (3) Dravidians, (4) Round-heads, and (5) Aryans. These divisions are based on inferences drawn from language, culture and physique.

As they are given in the order in which they appeared or came to India these racial elements should be studied in the reverse order so as to know who were the original inhabitants of India.

The Aryans are supposed to have come to India between 1500 and 1000 B. C. This supposition is not based on any historical or archaeological evidence, but is merely based on linguistic grounds, though the fallacy of such has been acknowledged from the days of Max Muller. On the other hand, it will be seen from the Vedas, Sastras and Puranas, as it was shown in Book I that no Aryans came to India, and if any Aryan movements have taken place it was from India to other countries.

The Round-heads are supposed to have come to India about the third millenium B. C., from the southern Steppes of Russia through Iran, due to some disturbance in their native land. They are stated to have come through the north-western

passes down to the west coast as far as Coorg, then avoiding Malabar, trickled through Mysore into Tamil and Telegu-speaking areas, until they met in Bengal another batch of them that came down from the frontier through the southern banks of the Jumna and Ganges.

The coming of the Round-heads to India is established only by cranial index. Cranial index is determined by dividing the greatest length of the skull by its greatest breadth, and multiplying the quotient by 100. The medium headed people have an index of 75 to 80. Below this limit, the individuals are ranked as long heads and above it as round heads. This was considered to be a satisfactory test at one time; in fact when the racial divergences in India were first studied, greatest importance was given to the cranium test. "This test" says Marett, "will not by itself carry us far... ......it may be that a given people tend to have a characteristic head form, not so much because they are of a common breed, as because they are subjected after birth, or at any rate conception, to one and the same environment." "Some careful observations made by Professor Boas on American immigrants from various parts of Europe seem to show that the new environment does in some unexplained way, modify the head form to a remarkable extent. For example, amongst the East European Jews the head of the European-born is shorter and wider than that of the American-born, the difference being even more marked in the second generation of the American-born. At the same time other European nationalities exhibit

changes of other kinds, all these changes, however, being in the disection of a convergence towards one and the same American type."

If cranium test will not carry us far, and if the cranial index is subject to conditions after birth, and if geographical conditions have a tendency to create new type of heads, should we place much reliance on it in determining the racial elements in India? Could not the presence of the round-heads in Coorg and other places be attributed to some geographical conditions or to some environment after birth or after conception about which we know little?

Then the nature of the Negrito element in the racial make-up may be investigated. The Negritos are pygmies ranging from four to five feet in height and they are very dark in colour and are distinguished by their "pepper-corn" hair. They are generally found in Malaya, Philippines and Andaman islands. In Malaya they are known as Samanga and Sakai, and in the Philippines as Aeta. Strictly speaking they are not found in India but certain Negrito characteristics have been observed in the eastern and southern parts of India, among the Kada tribes of Cochin and Ceylon and occasionally among the tribes of the Rajmahal Hills, Bihar, and among the Naga tribes on the frontier of Assam and Burma. Herr Fehlinger was of opinion that they reached India partly from Africa and partly from Australia, though there are others like Anantha Krishna Ayer who were of the opinion that they could not have come from either of these places.

The Kadars are a wild tribe with no fixed habitation and who live by hunting and collecting forest produce. They are called Kadars for they live in Kad or jungle. They, like the Dravidians, bury their dead, though they do not observe pollution after a birth or death in the family. But as observance of pollution is based on a fixed residence and organised social life, this should not mark them out as ethnically different from the Dravidians. However, their influence on the social system in India is counted as nil by the anthropologists.

After eliminating these three elements the two that will be left in the racial make-up of India will be Proto-Australoids and the Dravidians.

The Proto-Australoids or Pre-Dravidians as they are sometimes called, are characterised by very wavy and even curly hair, a broad nose, coarse features and a darkish skin. They are alike the aborigines of Australia, and are widely spread over India and the Indian Archipelago. They are traced in the lower classes of India, and it is admitted that they formed the bulk of the population at some very early date. As there are two distinct families of Austric languages in India, they are supposed to have entered India by two different routes, one round the west of the Himalayas, and the other through the eastern section. The language spoken by the former is said to be Kolayan and by latter Mon-Khmer. Both are of a sub-Australoid type. Mon-Khmer-speaking people are confined to Assam; while those who speak Kolaryan are few in number and widespread.

The date of the Austroloid incursion into India has not yet been determined. But from the alternate name of Pre-Dravidian given to them by anthropologists, it may be that in their opinion it took place before the coming of the Dravidians. The Dravidians are also supposed to have come from outside India. Though their language affinity has not been established outside India, their cultural parallels have been traced to the old civilizations of Mesopotamia, Syria and Crete. According to Elliot Smith they were a branch of the Mediterranean race, who, from somewhere in East Africa wandered into India via Arabia and South Persia, many centuries before the coming of Stone-culture. The relation of the Mediterranean race with some section of the people in South India is established by means of certain common peculiarities, such as the structure of the hair, softness of the skin and scarcity of hair on the body. Whether they came from outside or not, the Dravidians were in the Indus valley about 3,000 B. C., if one is to judge from the archaeological discoveries made in that region. Hence if the Austoloids were the first to arrive through the North-West they must have come before 3,000 B. C.

But the consensus of opinion is that the Dravidians spread all over India at one time, before any other race found their way in. Geologically the Deccan is most ancient, and the Indo-Gangetic plain, in the phraseology of the geologists is of 'yester-date'. There are those who consider that probably South India was the cradle of the human race, and according to Sir John Evans was "once

the passage ground by which the ancient progenitors of the northern and Mediterranean races proceeded to the parts of the globe which they inhabit". The Dravidians, or the people of the south therefore should be considered as those who inhabited the Indo-Gangetic plain first.

From the Puranas it will be seen that India or Jambu-dvipa was once occupied entirely by one race. Vishnu Purana (II. 1) says Agnidhra has the sovereignty of Jambu-dvipa. He had nine sons, "all equal to the patriarchs in prowess". Their names were Nabhi, Kimpurusha, Harvarsha, Ilavarta, Ramya, Hiranvata, Kuru, Bhadrasva, and Ketumalas, and among these sons, he conferred the sovereignty of the entire Jambu-dvipa or India. The Puranic authors tried to name the respective countries which they inherited. But unfortunately in their attempt they confused people or persons who occupied the country with the country itself and the descendants with the ancestry. For instance, Kimpurushas were as race descended from Manu Svarochita, Ilavrata and Harvarsha were names of the countries, while Kuru stood for a country which the Kurus occupied later in Puranic history. Such confusions may be found even among the present-day writers when they write about the long-forgotten past. However, this establishes that the whole of India was occupied at one time by one race whether they were called Agnidhras, Pre-Dravidians or Dravidians.

The distinction between the Dravidian and Pre-Dravidian, first appears to have been drawn by Haldon ; before him, Risely divided the racial ele-

ments in India only as Dravidian, Mongolian and Indo-Aryan. But if India was inhabited at one time by only one race, and if it was the cradle of the human race, one should not bother much about the Dravidian and and pre-Dravidian distictions, as what it observed as Dravidian and pre-Dravidian characteristics could have been only two different stages in the cultural development or racial make-up of one and the same people.

No doubt, the anthropologists have observed among those whom they classify as Proto-Australoids or Proto-Dravidians, certain characteristics common to the aborigines of Australia and the Indian Archipelago, and others have observed certain cultural affinities with the backward groups of South America. These also may bear Puranic testimony. According to the Puranas there were seven Dvipas (islands) and seven seas. Though the later Puranic and epic writers have misrepresented that they were concentric round Jambudvipa or India, these may be recognised as seven stretches of land facing the southern ocean, namely, India, Burma, Malay, Indian Archipelago and Australia, all on the east of the Indian peninsula, and Arabia, South Africa and South America on the west. This is a great presumption to take, and it may look even absurd. But a glance on the map of the Southern ocean with its current chart will not make this an improbability, as the boats let loose and got astray from Indian shores may be washed on to these shores, which the pre-Puranic authors described as dvipas. However, the Puranic chronology shows that Agnidhra, who was the

sole ruler of Jambu-dvipa had several brothers, and seven of them described as the rulers of these seven dvipas (Vishnu Purana : II. 1). The Puranic phraseology is no doubt defective, and it indicates confusion and ignorance on the part of writers, but it envisages a unity of race, which the anthropologists have proved by racial affinities.

The Puranic authors have indicated in their own style, the presence of the Austrolids in North India evidently at a later date. It is said that the first of the Manus, Svayambhuva, or the self-born, had two sons, Pryavrata and Uttanapada. Pryavrata's sons were Agnidhras and they ruled over the seven Dvipas including India. Uttanapada is not included in Agnidhras, but they say that in his line a Manu was born. He was Manu Chakshusha, the Progenitor of the Purus who descended from Pururavas, who was a son born of Ila, who is said to have changed her sex alternately. In the list of the fourteen Manus, Chakshusha is the sixth and the first of the present Manus and the first one who is not specified as a Pryavrata (See Vol. II). All the four Manus, Svarochita, Uttama, Tamas and Raivata were qualified as Pryavratas, which may indicate that all of them were of one ethnical group of Dravidian origin or Agnidhras, and that Chaksusha is not being in that category, will indicate that he was of a different group. If the name Uttánapada, given to this supposed ancestor of Chakshusha, stands for some people in Uttarapads or North India, it should indicate that the descendants of Manu-Chakshusha were of Austrolid origin.

However, there were people of Austrolid origin in India from the early dawn of Puranic history. Later they came to be known as Kolaryans, or Mundas, Kois, Santals and under other names. According to Sir John Campbell, Kolara was the name by which India was known to the ancient world. He was not far wrong if by that he meant Northern India, for, the Kols or Mundas on their arrival spread over northern India. Sarat Chandra Roy has taken great pains to trace the movements of the Mundas from Azamgarh in north-east U. P. to the interior of Chotanagpur, through Kalanjar, Garh Chitra, Nagwar, Garh Dharwar, Garh Patali, Garh Pippara, Manda Pahar, Bijnagarh, Hardinagarh, Laknougarh, Naga Garh, Raja Garh and Omedanda. This is a very round about route from the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh to the north-west Rewa, then to Rajputana, then to Agra, Bijnor, Lucknow, North Bihar to the foot of the Himalayas and back to south Bihar and finally to Chota-Nagpur, whence they were driven away east-ward by the Oraons. This is based on a tradition of the Mundas in which they claim Ajimgarh or Ajamgarh as their original home. In most of these places archaeological remains connected with the Mundas could be traced, but that is no reason to consider that they went all round through these places. The error is in considering that the Mundas were a small group of the aborigines. They appear to have been a big race with many branches spread all over northern and eastern India. Ajamgarh might have been one of their prominent centres. Ajamgarh in Santhali may mean the grandfather's

home, similarly Ayodhya or Ayodhi would mean the mother's seat, as Ayo means mother in Santhali.

If they were in Ayodhya and if that was their mother country what could have made them leave such a magnificant place of ancient fame and emigrate to mountain fastness ? It cannot but have been religion or social puritanism. The Mundas were free and ease-loving people, fond of dancing, singing and drinking, like every advanced nation of the western world, but without their aptitude for work. The Oraons were also pleasure-loving, but they had shown great aptitude for work, especially for weaving and cultivation. Most accurately levelled up and terraced rice fields on the slope of the Chota-Nagpur and Manbhum hills will bear testimony to their skill in agriculture and their home-woven saris exhibit great skill and fine design.

To all appearances though the monarchical rule developed first among the Dravidians, and Ayodhya became a Limited Monarchy, from the day of Prithu, who covenanted with the people to rule for the good of the people, the authority of the kings declined when the priestly power increased under the hegemony of the Vasisthas. It must be when religion began to set aside all other considerations that the Mundas began their wanderings. The Mundas still retain the memory of their care-free and easy-going day of old in their folk-lore and songs. They even now sing :

"Then was the Satya yug, now the Kali yug,
O! gone the Golden Age of old!

Then reigned Satya Yug, now the reign of Kali,
On earth has come woes untold,
Men in that blessed ancient age of gold,
Had not to do but to drink their ale,
Now that cursed Kali reigns supreme,
Dire death from hunger doth prevail,
O ! for the days when men no cares did know,
But drank their full of home-brewed ale!
Woe to the age when men on earth below,
Do daily die of famine fell".

............Translation by Sarat Chandra Roy.

This no doubt is an index to their present economic condition as well as to the memories of old. The Brahmanic literatures also cry out against the Kali Yuga, and praise Satya Yuga, but not for the pleasures which had ceased to exist, but for the loss of privileges.

The Mundas were warriors and rulers till the end of the Puranic period. Vishnu Purana mentions thirteen Munda kings along with eight Yavanas, fourteen Tukharas and eighteen Manus, who ruled the earth for thirteen hundred and ninety-nine years. Unfortunately no hint is given about the country where the Mundas ruled. However, when the Mundas retreated to the Ranchi Hills they do not appear to have sneaked into a jungle to find a hiding place for them. Their tradition is that when they penetrated to the forest land in Ranchi, their strength was twenty one thousand, and their leader was Rasa Munda, their first halting place was Muruma, now a village, where a great dancing festival is held every year to commemorate the event. Those twenty-one thousand were

divided into twenty on 'kullis' or clans. Each clan had a chief with the Manki, whose descendants may still be traced. Manki was not a king; he was a leader. Before it became hereditary, the post of the Mankis was an elected one. In the administration of the affairs of Kulli, the Manki was assisted by a 'Panch' or a council of elders. Custom was the law for them. Offence against the custom was punishable with fines and in extreme cases by expulsion from the Kulli or community. Differences between the Kullis and matters of common concern were settled by a council called 'Pati-Panch', which was held under the chairmanship of a Manki. The village head-men swore allegiance to the Manki. Military training among them was compulsory, though in their new homes they took up agriculture as a seasonal undertaking. In the centre of a group of villages they had 'hats' or market for buying and selling, or bartering their respective produce. Outside the village they had a place called Sarna, where they worshipped and sacrificed to Sing-bonga, or the Sungod. Inside each village, they had an Akahra, or dancing ground, where young and old, men and women, met in the evenings, drank the rice beer, sang songs of joy, and danced till the 'moons run pale'. Unlike the Hindus of today, their community life was socialistic. They had dormitories for boys and girls, where under the supervision of elected elders, the children were brought up to the age of discretion. They conducted periodic hunts, and other tribal festivals. Their organisations were democratic and communistic. Each one lived for the community, and each

worked for the common good. Each village held its own land, each one cultivated as much of it as he could. This happy state of affairs had to come to an end, when the Oraons, a hardier and more industrious race, appeared among them and pushed them on to further forest regions towards the east, and south-east. What could have been the period of the Munda emigration to the Ranchi Hills? It would have been possible to ascertain, if their leaders later on had not taken up a Brahmana-made geneology descending from Karkotaka Naga, a snake.

If the Mundas and the Dravidians were the only racial elements in India, and if there was no Aryan invasion, the Aryans could be only a mixed race of the Dravidians and Mundas. Pargiter based on Puranic chronology divided the people of India into three distinct stocks; one stock descended from Pururavas Aila, the second descended from the chieftains of Gaya and eastern India, and the third consisting of all the kings and chiefs of the rest of India. The first is the well-known race of the Ailas or Aidas, often called the Lunar race; the second may be distingushed as the Saudyumna race, and the third, he says though with no definite common name in tradition, yet being descended from the sons of Manu, sons of Vivasvas the Sun, may be called the Solar Race. At it was shown in Book III all those who descended from Manu Vaivasvata, or sons of Vaivasvam, could easily be recognised as the Dravidians and as the second stock descended from Sudyumna or the Saudyumnas could be recognised as the Mundas, then

the Ailas could only be the mixed race of Mundas and Dravidians. The origin of this race under mysterious circumstances, from Ila who became man and woman alternately, and her finally marrying Sudyumna, lent itself to this conclusion. It is in this Aila race, that Pargiter has recognised the Aryans, and it was they under the names of Yadavas, Purus, Druhyus, Anus and Turvasus, who made the Puranic history, in the main. Ila was a princess of the Iksvaku line, and it was through her clandestine marriage with Sudyumna, evidently a king of the Mundas, Pururavas, the first of the Ailas was born. On account of the stigma attached to his birth, what difficulties he had to undergo, and how he overcame all, and established a kingdom of his own at Pratisthan, all are shown in Volume II. What remains to be noted here is that the mixed race often surpasses the parental stocks, and often brings out the best qualities in both. The superiority and the rapid progress of the Americans may well be attributed to the intermixture of many a European race in a free land and fertile soil. Even the misalliance of the Europeans has improved the stock of the mixed Asiatics and the Europeans have developed some admirable qualities which the parental elements seldom possessed.

The word Arya may have derived from (ara), to plough. It may have been the proud Mundas who nicknamed Pururavas and his descendents when they took plough or settled form of life. The Ailas on becoming powerful, took wives from the Dravidian stock, and their enterprising history

begins with the sons of Yayati through two Dravidian wives, Devayani and Sarmishtna. Within a few centuries they overran the whole of northern India, penetrated to the Deccan, emigrated to central Asia, and they were at Boghas-kuie in 1400 B. C. to conclude a treaty of peace with the Hittite king of Cilisia.

Thus it will be seen that the main racial elements in India are the Dravidian and Austrolid. When these two mixed in different degrees under different climatic and geographical conditions at short and long intervals and subsequent social isolation and personal selection made various types of persons in various localities; and that should account for the various types and groups that are found in India. It is an admitted fact that man's skin gets darker in tropical climate, and geographical environment would affect his physical type and make changes in body structure. The racial changes that are seen in India are mainly the result of environment and climate. But it is not denying that no other element came to India at any time. There never was any restriction on foreigners, many came by sea and land and settled down in India. But their number has been infinitely small, except perhaps at the period of the Huna incursions. Although all those who came, except the Jews, Christians and Muslims, adopted Hindu culture, Hindu religion and Hindu ways of life, their contribution to racial make-up was as insignificant as it had been in the cultural sphere.

It is the fashion now to consider the aborigines like the Mundas and Oraons as anthropological

specimens, representing bygone races and bygone cultures. Never were they considered ethnically different from the rest of the Indians until the theory of the Aryan invasion and the superiority of the Aryan culture were trumpeted from the press and platform by interested parties. But are they actually different from the so-called descendants of the Aryans, who are living in their vicinity? It will often be found that what differences there are will dwindle into practically nothing even in the same generation if the children of the aborigines are removed from their surroundings, and given better food and education. Climate and environment have a levelling effect on all those who live in the same locality, even though they may be of different races. The Mundas are of Kolaryan descent and the Oraons are Dravidians. Their long stay in places like Manbhum and Ranchi has obliterated most of their original characteristics, and they are beginning to appear alike. From a comparison of anthropometric indices, Sir Robert Risely concluded that they both were Dravidians. It cannot be denied that occupation, food, mode of living, climate and geographical conditions have influenced in modelling and modifying physical characteristics.

But the best way to realise that the aborigines in India are not different from the rest of the Indians is to study their custom, manners and social habits vis-a-vis those of the higher classes among the Hindus, and to draw one's own conclusion, unbiased by preconceived notions and uninfluenced by the established opinions. One may find that every custom or prejudice that is found even

among the highest class Hindus, who claim direct descent from the Aryans, has not only its parallels, but also its sources among the aborigines. Some, who have observed these, have explained them away as imitation by the aborigines; but to test its fallacy, one should study them among those aborigines who are least in touch with the Hindus, and in such primary items that are essential to a primitive community. Then it will be found that their religion is not different from that of the Vedic Rishis, their prejudices are not different from those of the Brahmanas, their customs and manners are not much different from those of the ordinary Hindus, though their social ideals in some cases may be somewhat better.

CHAPTER 10

MUNDA CONTRIBUTION TO CASTE SYSTEM

There is a great parallel between the Munda social organizations and the Hindu organizations of 'gotras' and 'Varnas'. The Mundas are now found in certain parts of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, where they are known under three different names, the Mundas, Santhals and Hoes. Their numbers have shown a gradual increase under British rule, due to peaceful occupations and settled form of life. According to 1911 census the respective strength of the Mundas, Santhals and Hoes were 558,200 and 2,078,035 and 420,179; while according to the census of 1931, they increased to 658,450 and 2,508,789 and 523,158 respectively thereby showing an increase of about 18% among the Mundas, 27% among the Santhals, and over 24·5% among the Hoes. Ten per cent per decade is the usual anticipated increase in a peaceful community; but the Mundas show a slight decrease in this respect; the reason for the decrease may be found in their tendency to join other groups; to get themselves classified as high class Hindus, such a tendency could be found among all the tribes in India. Hindu religion and Hindu custom from which their ancestors had run away are now holding out temptations for them, especially when they are faced with the missionary propaganda and vilification of everything they cherished.

The Santhals are divided into 12 Nijs or main septs of which the trace of one sept only could not be found; suggesting the Lost Tribe of the Israelites. Most probably the lost tribe has become completely Brahmanised or Kshatrianised; and their descendants are not likely to give out their secrets.

India is not lacking in historic records; but in many cases, those who have the records are not very quick in bringing them forward, for fear of exposing their ancestry. Among the Hindus, even Christian ancestry may be found; among the Brahmanas, low class Hindu ancestry may be found, and among the Rajputs aboriginal ancestry may be found. Many an aboriginal chief, as long as he was one with his people, was powerful. But when he succumbed to Brahmanisation and became Kshatriya or Rajput, he weakened his position. Why should a soldier fight for his king or ruler, when after the victory he cannot touch even the feet of his king, to show his respect in Hindu fashion, or have a meal with him to celebrate the occasion. Of course he had his pay; but it did not take him along to see that even Mohammedans were prepared to pay him and treat him on more equitable terms on their dining mats and even the mosque, provided he was amenable. Sivaji wrote Jai Singh an excellent letter asking him to give up the service under Aurangzeb and join hands with him. Jai Singh did not agree. Would Sivaji have shaken hands with Jai Singh and sat on the same mat and partaken of the same meal?

The Santhals have their septs, and sub-septs

for each sept. These septs are like the Gotras and sub-Gotras of the Hindus. The main septs or Nijs of the Santhals and the number of their sub-septs or sub-Nijs are :—

	Nijs		and		No. of Sub-Nijs.
1.	Kisku	...	,,	...	15
2.	Hasdak	...	,,	...	15
3.	Murmu	...	,,	...	27
4.	Hembrom	...	,,	...	18
5.	Marandi	...	,,	...	27
6.	Soren	...	,,	...	23
7.	Tudu	...	,,	...	19
8.	Baske	...	,,	...	17
9.	Besra	...	,,	...	14
10.	Kore	...	,,	...	15
11.	Pauria	...	,,	...	13
12.	Not traceable	...	,,	...	203

Hence the total number of sub-septs is 203, showing an average of over 18 sub-septs per main sept. The number of people in each sept may vary ; however, an idea about the magnitude of a sub-sept may be formed on the basis of the total population of 1931, which will show an average of 12,300 per sub-sept, or 228,000 per sept. Many Gotras and sub-Gotras, or sub-castes of the Hindus may not come anywhere near this average ; while some exclusive Gotras and sub-castes are much smaller than any of these sub-septs.

The formation of sept or 'parist', as they call it, may further be studied. Take, for instance, Niji Hembrom with 18 subdivisions, that can be grouped under three heads according to the dictionary

meaning of the words that stand for the name of the sub-septs :—

A. Under the head profession or calling :—

Nij or Niji Hembrom or Hembrom's own

ManjiKil	=	the village chief.
Naeke Kil	=	the village priest.
Kasa	=	the farmer.
Thakur	=	the petty chief, or the small Raja.
Kuari	=	the Prince.
Bitol	=	the outcaste.
Sade	=	wish or desire.

B. Under the head objects.

Gau	=	the arecanut.
Gau Soren	=	the constellation of Taures.
Quor or Kaour	=	the door leaf.
Badar	=	the dense low jungle.
Gar or Gara	=	the puddle clay.
Handi	=	the rice bear.
Lat	=	the creeper.

C. Under the head animals or insects.

Lahar	=	the lace insect.
Sole	=	a large species of shrimp, 'sole icak'.
Datala	=	a large kind of wild boar with huge tusks.

The meaning of the words that stand for the sub-septs are taken from Campbell's Santhali Dictionary. From their respective literal meanings it will be seen that some names are based on occupation, or place in the society, while others are based on totem objects. On comparing these sub-septs with the sub-septs of other 10 main septs, it will be found that :—

(1) Every sept has a sub-sept called its own, indicating an original division into tribes.

(2) Every sept has a Naeke or priestly sub-sept, the forerunner of the Brahman priest.

(3) Every sept, except Hasdak, has a Manjhi or ruling sub-section representing the royal families, equivalent of the Kshatriyas.

(4) Every sept has a Bitol or Outcaste-subsept, probably the forerunners of the Chamars. These may have consisted of members who offend against the social laws of the tribe.

(5) In the main Nij Sept there is a sub-sept called Kasa, meaning farmer, though such is not found in other septs. This may indicate their taking up agriculture for the first time. Here in a nutshell, one has all the elements of the Indo-Aryan polity, or social organisation, but without the baneful effects of the caste system, such as untouchability and unapproachability. It will also be evident that Varna divisions originated on the basis of calling or profession, and not on the basis of political supremacy of one race or section over the other. However, the formation of sub-septs under different profession or calling shows the initial stage of caste formation in the casteless society of the Santhals.

Another further element in the increase in the number of caste can also be traced back to the Santhals, namely, the formation of new sub-septs by new-comers from other tribes or from other septs. Among the Baske sept, there is one sub-sept called Munda Baske; and among the Murmu sept

there is a Munda Murmu sub-sept; these could not but have happened without the Mundas mixing with the Santhals. Similarly sub-septs like Baske-Besra, and Gua-Hembrom-Kora, will indicate blending of the old septs resulting in the creation of new ones. Many a caste among the Hindus is formed on a similar basis. The higher the number of caste taboos, the greater the chance for the formation of new castes and sub-castes.

The Santhal sept and the Brahman Varna are based on the same principle of labour, though the Brahmanas made their division more water-tight. The Santhals are as fanatic against marriage within the same gotra as the Brahmanas are.

In the original habitat of the Mundas the caste ramification is greater than elsewhere, if it is to be judged by the greatest number of the depressed classes that are found there. Madhya Desa, or U. P. (Uttar Pradesh) had been the chief and the earliest habitat of the Munda race, before they receded to the jungles of Bengal and Bihar. And it is in U. P. that the greatest number of the depressed classes are found. The census report of 1931 shows that 23 per cent of the population of this most populous and extensive province were those who were classed as "depressed or exterior" castes. This percentage was exceeded only in the small state of Travancore where it was 35 per cent, though with a greater intensity of population, where both unapproachability and untouchability had been practised most rigorously. Even in Madras Presidency, where the position of the depressed classes is worse, their percentage in 1931

was only 15. In Assam, the percentage was 21, in Bengal and Bihar 15 and 14 per cent respectively; in the Central Provinces it was 1%, while in the North-West Frontier Provinces and Baluchistan it was nil. In the last two provinces the absence of the depressed classes can be attributed to the conversion of the lower classes into Islam. The insignificant average of one per cent in the Central Provinces (Madhya Pradesh) may be accounted for by two reasons; first the absence of the Munda background, and secondly a later arrival there of Brahmanism. Hence it may be reasonably assumed that it was the Mundas who were the prime movers in creating the 'Varnas', and their Brahmana descendants were those who created and fanned the flame of caste differences.

Wherever the Brahmanas went they took the Varnasrama-dharma and 'jati' with them, and wherever they were, they gave special privileges to those who were prepared to serve them. All those who were prepared to do menial service in a Brahmana household became the best of the Sudras. Those who did all the dirty work in the temples became privileged classes. Even the sweeper of a temple was considered higher than a Sudra aristocrat. They did not make the conditions of the lower classes worse by impositions on them, but they took the sides of their adherents and through them established their superiority over the others. There was no great difference among the Brahmana, Kshattriya, Vaisya and Sudra, in early days, the differences among them were nothing more than those that are found between a Manji (chief),

Naeke (priest), Kasa (cultivator) and Bitol (outcaste) of a Santhal Sept.

The nature of the changes that took place in the Hindu community may be seen from a close study of the Bhuiya tribes. Whether they are Kolaryans or Dravidians is a moot point. Dalton is of opinion that they are Dravidians ; Mcpherson also agrees with him. The Bhuiya features are distinctly Tamilian, though their religion and custom may be akin to Munda or Kolaryan. The Bhuiyas are found chiefly in Bihar, Orissa, United Provinces, Bengal and Central Provinces, their strength in these localities according to the Census of 1931 was :—

Bihar and Orissa	625,800
United Provinces	69,100
Bengal	50,400
Central Provinces and Berar ...	26,200

They consist of three main groups, those who became Hinduised, those who were Tribal Bhuinhars, and those who became converts to Christianity and Islam. The number of those who became Hinduised was over 750,700, while those who remained as Tribal were less than 10,500. They are known under the names of Bhumias, Bhuinhars, Bhuiyars, Buis, Bhuis, etc., but all derived from Bhui and Bhumi, meaning land. They were, no doubt, possessers of land in Gangapur, Bonai, Keonjar and Bamra were Bhuinhars. The slightly different names they adopted in different

localities will indicate the extent of Aryanisation or Hinduisation they have gone through; the mere Hinduised ones had a tendency to adopt Sanskrit names. According to the above census there were no Tribal Bhumiyars in the United Provinces, all of them had become Hinduised, and some even claiming high Brahmanhood and Kshatriyahood. The centre of the Tribal Bhuinhars was certain parts of Bihar and Orissa. Bhuinhars as a land-owning class were respected everywhere, and even rulers were found among the Hinduised Bhuiyars. Their prestige had become so great that the Mundas, Oraons and Kharias of Chotanagpur adopted Bhuiya as an honorific title.

The process of gradual evolution from the aborigines to a higher class Hindu was a main feature of social evolution in India. Often government officers have noticed and commented upon it. Buchanan stated in 1810-11 that "some men of the families of Thakurs, Thakoits and Baboos, whom in Captain Brown's time (1772-8), every one called Bhuiyas, and were then commonly called as such by other tribes, said that nobody called them so; and that they were Suraji Bangs and knew nothing of Bhuiyas". Here is an example of the members of a tribe not only disclaiming their ancestry, but also claiming a high discent from the Sun, like the kings of the Ikshvaku dynasty. Instances like these are many. Many a petty chief or members of the land-owning class, though they may not have any land now, claim descent from the Sun, like Ikshvaku or from the Moon like the Purus. Change from Bhuiya to Suraji Bang, or Surya Vansi, was

immediately attended by two things, one the appointment of a Brahman priest, and the other certain restrictions in diet. If one was not rich enough to appoint a Brahman purohit or priest, he had to be content often with the ministration in Brahman style by one of his own caste. The Surya Vansi Bhuiyas did not give up meat-eating and wine-drinking all at once. Though their successors have done so in later years, they abstained only from eating beef, but they like most of the Hindus eat the meat of "fowls, goats and pig, and drink spiritous liquors". One hundred years later Sir Hugh Mcpherson, in his Settlement Report of the Santhal Parganas, says that "their chiefs make the usual Kshatriya pretensions and calling themselves Surajbansis disclaim connection with their Bhuiya kinsmen". In the same way as the Surajbansis disclaimed relationship with their Bhuiya brethren, the Bhuiyas themselves disclaimed affinity with their less fortunate brethren called Musahars, or rat-eating Bhuiyas. The Brahman objection to the company of Chandalas is on the plea that the latter eat beef ; while the Pulaya avoid the company of the Parayas on the plea that the latter eat the meat of animals which have died naturally. According to Manu Smriti rat was not a specially forbidden diet to the Brahmanas, as they were forbidden only "mushroom, the tame hog, town cock, leek, onion and garlic". Presumably the totem determined what food was forbidden to each, and they could not have eaten the totems, as it was their duty to nourish and cherish them. However, it appears that the Musahars were as much Bhuiyas as Bhuiyas

themselves ; their habitat is Bihar and Orissa and their number according to the 1931 census was 358,200, nearly half as much as that of the Hinduised Bhuiyas.

Hence Bhuiyas present an excellent example of how from the original aboriginal state, the caste or group differences and distinctions arose gradually as men disclaim association with their brethren in toil, and claimed new importance to themselves, both divine and social. The formation of the four Varnas may also be found among the Bhuiyas. Sarat Chandra Roy classifies them into five divisions : (1) The Des or primitive Bhuiya represented by the Pauri Bhuiya of the hills of Keonjhar, (2) the Khandait or Paik Bhuiya of the Orissa plains and southern part of Chotanagpur, (3) the mixed Rajkoli or Rajkuli Bhuiyas of the Orissa States, (4) the Praja or Rautali Bhuiyas of Orissa and southern Chotanagpur, and (5) the land holding Ghatwar, Tikait, or Rae Bhuiyas of the Santhal Parganas, Hazaribagh, Gaya, Monghyr and Bhagalpur districts. The latter usually wear the sacred thread, indicating that they have become 'dvijas', or twice born ; the next step for them is to become Brahmanas ; but, among them Brahmanhood did not hold out much in comparison to Kshatriyahood, with its pelf and power. The Paiks or Khandaits have a semi-military organisation, and they carry a sword or axe as the emblem of their nobility. They are evidently Kshatriyrs in the making, without the sacred thread of the Dvijas. The Praja Bhuiya, the agriculturists, represent the Vis of the Vedic days, or the Vaisyas of the post-Vedic

days. In the Rajkuli Bhuiya, one may trace the making of the Sudras, as they are attached to the ruling chiefs as personal servants, attendants and the like. The last but not the least is the Pauri, or the oldest Bhuiya, the aborigine who are at least affected by Brahmanism or caste organisation, and as such they have retreated to the tangled hill tracts of Keonjhar and Bonia states, between the rivers Baitarni in the north and the Brahmani in the south, over the hills with an elevation of 2,000 to 3,500 feet above sea level. There they live undisturbed by the Hindus and uninfluenced by Brahmanism. They worship their god Dharma-Deota, the Sun-god, and Vasu-mati the earth-goddess, worshipping the former in Munda fashion, and the latter in Dravidian fashion. They bury their dead sometimes in Dravidian fashion, and sometimes in Munda fashion cremate them, treasure the ashes and bones and erect 'pulki' stones in commemoration of their distinguished ancestors. Though they are not totemists, they ban marriage between males and females of the same village, which to them is similar to Brahman 'gotra', or Oraon 'Kuli'. They have their Brahmanas or priests in the name of Dihuri, one who makes the frictional fire in Vedic fashion. They have their Kshatriyas in Naeks, and their Vaisyas in their Projas. Though originally the posts of Dihuri and Naek were elective, there is a marked tendency for them to become hereditary. Though the Dihuri is elected and installed afresh, every year, the same Dihuri is permitted to continue year after year, and at times his son is permitted to succeed him, and he

is even allowed to adopt a son for the purpose. Perhaps it may not take long before he becomes a hereditary priest like the Brahmana.

The Dihuri lights the sacred fire by the frictional method on their New Year's day, and performs various seasonal sacrifices on behalf of the commune. To meet the expenses thereof he enjoys the 'Dihuri' land, in the same way as the Brahmanas possess the 'Brahmadeya' land as specified in Kautilya's Arthasastra and as is well in evidence in Kerala. The fortune of many a Brahman family today may be found in Brahmadeya land. Many ruling chiefs and landowners in days gone by entrusted the Brahmanas with land, villages and territories for feeding the poor, and doing 'pujas' in the temples. These custodians have usurped such donations for their own benefit. Feeding the poor they first restricted the food to the Brahmanas and then exclusively to the members of their own family. The primary emblem of Dihuri is the 'sup' or the winnowing basket, like that of many aboriginal tribes, and like the one that plays an important part in certain Brahman ceremonies; and the secondary emblem is the wearing of the sacred thread in Brahman fashion. These and similar developments among the aborigines will enable one to see how the Varnasrama-dharma originated among the Indo-Aryans, and on what lines they had developed, which when combined with 'jati' restriction about interdining and intermarriage have become a powerful weapon among the higher castes to deny equality and fraternity to the dep-

ressed and suppressed classes, or to the Sudras and Chamars.

The lines on which caste developed were purely of aboriginal origin. It has no political significance based on conquest, though slavery at times gave it a political complex.

CHAPTER II

THE DRAVIDIAN CONTRIBUTION TO CASTE SYSTEM

Dravidian contribution to caste may best be studied on the Malabar coast. Malabar is a museum for anthropologists. There the chief element in population is Dravidian. There the so-called Negritos and Aryan could be found living side by side. There the round-heads and long-heads could be found in every grade of society or caste. There advanced castes like the Nairs will be found still following the Matriarchal law of inheritance. There the Brahmanas could be found as priests. There the Sudras could be found ruling against all Smriti injunctions. Furthermore untouchables and unapproachables could be found as the best educated in Hindu sciences and Sastras.

According to the Kerala Mahadmya, this land is stated to have been given up by the sea at the command of Parasu Ram, a Brahman hero from the North for his Brahman followers to settle down, while according to the Puranic chronology Parasu Ram's time should be about sixty generations before the Mahabharata Battle, or c. 21st century B. C. But the excavations at Ur of the Chaldians of 3000 B. C., have shown that they used Malabar teak which should be taken as an undeniable evidence of their trade with Malabar Coast as well as a proof of its existence before

the days of Parasu Ram. Then the people of Malabar had commercial and cultural contact with the Egypt of 2500 C. C., Palestine of 1000 B. C., with the Greeks and Romans just before and after the beginning of the Christian era.

The Greeks and the Romans had their settlements on the Malabar coast. Musiris (Kotungallur) and Becare (probably Vaikara, close to Kottayam), now both inland places were the main ports for the Grecian trade. The Romans traded with the ports of Tyndis, Muziris, Nelcyada, Cottonara, and Becare. It was from these ports that Malabar teak, pepper, spices, pearls, ivory, diamonds, rubies, amethysts and fine silk of China found their way to the Western world. Some of the kings of Malabar had Greek soldiers for their bodyguards. At Muziris, in a temple dedicated to Augustus, the Roman Emperor, was worshipped as God by his countrymen. During the days of Pliny, the historian, the trade balance between Rome and Malabar was in favour of Malabar to the extent of a sum equivalent to about half a million pounds sterling a year.

Some are of opinion that there were no caste restrictions in those days and the better class Greeks and Romans married even high class Nair ladies. It was quite probable that the Matriarchy women of Malabar may have taken some of these foreigners as their consorts, as they took Brahmanas in later periods. As this was before the Brahmanisation of Malabar and the Christianisation of Europe, there could have been no objection to such a procedure. Even now the Thiya ladies, who

belong to the second important community of Matriarchies, take Europeans for husbands without any stigma attached to such unions.

The background of the social organisation in Malabar is Matriarchy, which spread all over India at one time. The Matriarchal system should be considered as begun when man gave up his wandering life and began to have a fixed abode. Among the Nairs the fixed abode is called Tarawad, and among the lower classes it is called Tara. A Tarawad included a house and some acreage of land. It was a place for a mother group for generations to be born, to live, to die and to be buried. Every Tarawad bore a proper name, and all those who were descended from the same group were distinguished and recognised by the proper name of Tarawad. A Tarawad may have several branches, living in different houses, in the same locality or elsewhere. Yet it was not the 'Oor' of the Tamils, which was a village or settlement, with several 'veet' or houses. Oor being another name for thigh, Oorship appears to have had also a matriarchal origin, for the people of the same Oor may mean all those who shared the same thigh or were nurtured on the same lap, or descended from the same mother. Tarawad is like the Gotra of the Brahmanas, inasmuch as marriage is concerned. No marriage is allowed between man and woman of the same Tarawad, however remote may be their common ancestry.

Marriage among mankind, at first, must have been of a promiscuous nature. However, the brother-sister marriages, though it lingered in

countries like Egypt till the beginning of the Christian era, does not appear to have been the custom at any rate in advanced communities of India from about 2500 B. C., for no record of such marriages could be traced from the Puranas after that period except one or two. Even the primitive man in India appears to have noticed its ill effects from its apparent tendency to magnify the defects if any in a group. In the earliest form of exogamous marriage, the males of one group paid occasional visits to females of another group, and the children from such unions were brought up and cared for by the mother groups. The fathers had little responsibility for the children, and the children did not go to their fathers. This in fact has been the custom in Kerala till recent years. If the caste formation in Kerala is not studied with this background, some important features of Dravidian contribution to caste will be missed.

Caste is a social organisation, and Marett says that all social organisations should be investigated as "many wheels in a social machine", first as if they were stationary and then as if they were in motion. Applying this directive, the castes on Malabar coast may be studied under the following heads :

(i) Aborigines... { Vedan, Ullatan }

(ii) Slaves......... { Parayan, Pulayan }

...Once Unapproachables

(iii) Occupation of Professional Castes:

- Mannan
- Izavan
- Panan
- Valan
- Velan
- Kaniyan
- Kammala
  - Asari, once Untouchables
  - Musari
  - Kollan
  - Thattan
  - Kallan
- Kshurakan
- Veluthetan
- Brahman (Priestly)...

(iv) Leisurely... Castes:

- Nairs...... The common man
- Nampuris..... Super-Brahman.

The names of castes under these heads vary from place to place even on the Malabar coast, but to avoid complications those that are found in Middle Travancore are taken for study, as it is that part which is least affected by foreign invasions and external influences.

The aborigines there are Vetan and Ullatans. They have no fixed habitation. They roam from place to place, live on wild roots and tumers, and on birds and animals they trap. The Vetan is the same as Kadan elsewhere. They seldom visit villages. The Ullatan, as the name indicates, is an occasional visitor to the inhabited areas and begging in the time of scarcity. These two are entirely separate castes, with no intermarriage and

interdining between them. They do not give their women in marriage to any other caste high or low. They are endogamous, and unlike all other castes they do not eat the food cooked even by a Brahmana. The Brahmanas on the Malabar coast do not bury the surplus food, as it is the custom elsewhere; they have no objection in giving food to the people of other castes, provided it is after their eating. These tribes present an important feature in caste formation. They prefer to be separate. They are so by choice, as all castes or Jatis are. They accept the social superiority of none. They have not heard of any Vedic or divine dispensation. Though they have not much of a social organisation, whatever they have is their own, and even under compulsion they are not prepared to part with their society in notion or customs.

The Parayas and Pulayas came under the category of slaves. They were slaves until about a century ago. As slaves they were liable to be sold and purchased. They lived in their masters' estates. They were to work in the field, for which daily wages were paid to them. In their leisure hours or when they were not required by the masters, they were privileged to cultivate for their own benefit, and to engage in weaving, basket making and other such pursuits; the proceeds from such occupations were entirely their own, and their masters had no claim whatsoever. They were fond of music and dancing. Hardly any work was done without singing accompanied by their band. They were not to attend on their

masters personally. Unapproachability kept them away from their masters. A Paraya had to keep away 32 steps and a Pulaya 64 steps from his masters' caste. Though unapproachability was bad, it saved them from many a sad experience of the slaves elsewhere. Though untouchability was in practice everywhere in India, unapproachability was a unique custom on the Malabar coast. Even in the adjoining Tamil country, there had been no unapproachability. Untouchability and unapproachability often are justified on sanitary grounds, because of unclean habites among the lower classes. But here though the Parayas may eat meat of the deceased animals like cows and buffaloes, their unapproachability was half that of the Pulayas, who never ate beef, and were more vegetarians than the Parayas.

Though the lot of the slaves on the Malabar coast was not enviable, they had protection and security. There was no written law safeguarding their interest, but the tradition and custom were in their favour, which few dared to violate. Slavery was abolished, not because the Government had a scheme to improve the condition of the slaves, but it was the slogan of the day. These slaves were not domestic drudges to be kicked or killed at any one's pleasure but expert cultivators attached to the land. On liberation they had no land to cultivate. As casual labourers they had no security. In slavery, even when there was no work, their masters kept the wolf away from their doors. The abolition of slavery, in Malabar, ruined the slaves as well as their owners. The Christian mission-

aries thought that the Bible would save them, and many of them were converted to Christianity. The converted slaves were directed to the plantations run by the Europeans, where they had to work as indentured labourers. The new surroundings and new conditions under which they had to slog was not according to their liking. Consequently they took to their heels, whenever opportunity favoured them, and augmented the crowd of the unemployed.

Slavery on the Malabar coast was not imposed by the Aryans. It was introduced by the land-owing Nairs, who in consequence thereof became the leisurely class. The Nairs were Dravidians, though even in their present penury they refrain from handling the plough.

Both Parayas and Pulayas have been Hindus; they worship the Hindu gods in their own way, even now without any direction from the priestly Brahmanas. However, the Paraya connection with the Vedic religion could be seen from the personal names like Indra and Chandra among them. On the Malabar coast, the higher the caste the less Vedic names could be found among them. Even in slavery, the Paraya and Pulayas kept up untouchability and unapproachability among themselves, and there was no intermarriage nor inter-dining between them. The Parayas, like their masters, were Matriarchies, while the Pulayas have been Patriarchies all along. Among the Pulayas, stellar names like Chothi and Chithira could be found which should mark them out as followers of a stellar cult, that must have preceded the Vedic

or Solar cult. However, unapproachability and untouchability among them, even during their common slavery, will indicate that these were not imposed on them. They preferred to be separate from each other like all other castes all over India.

Among the professional classes, the most unapproachable were the Mannan and Izavan. The Mannan's unapproachability was sixteen steps, while that of the Izavan was twelve steps. Their profession used to be more or less the same. The Mannan climbed the trees and brought down coconut and arecanuts, while the Izavan climbed up the palm trees, tapped the juice and brought down the toddy, from which jaggery was made and alcohol was distilled. The Mannan was paid for his labour, while the Izavan was his own master and made his living from the sale of toddy, liquor and jaggery. A lesser degree in his unapproachability might have been due to his economic independence. The tradition is that the Izavan was a new-comer to Malabar. He is supposed to have come from an island called Iza, and the island origin is maintained in the alternate name of Thiya or 'dvipa' by which he is also known. Both were Matriarchal and Hindus by religion. Mannans is sometimes called Pathiyan or Pathihtan, one who has fallen from a higher position. The lower position that is attributed to the sweepers in other parts of India is said to be on account of the dirty work they have to do. On the Malabar coast there is no sweeper caste, but the Mannans has to do the first washing of the menstruation-stained clothes worn by the Nair women, before it is given to a

Veluthetan or washerman. There is neither intermarriage nor interdining among them. In fact they observed untouchability between them, and Izavan used to have a purificatory bath, if he happened to touch a Pathiyan ; but if he did not do so, no one except the members of his caste would have found fault with him. As the higher castes observed unapproachability with them, they observed unapproachability with the Parayas and Pulayas.

The rest of the occupational castes were not unapproachables though they were expected to keep at a respectable distance from higher castes, who observed untouchability with them. The main occupational castes were the Panan (tailor), the Velan (sawyer), the Kaniyan (astronomer), the Kammalans (artisans), Kshurakan (barber), and the Veluthetan (washerman).

The Panans were few in number. It was not surprising in a county, where the climate and custom made the people to wear least in the way of tailored apparel. The smallness of their number established the principle of demand and supply in caste formation. The Valan also emphasised the same principle. The sawing and shaping of the wood was entirely his work at one time. But when the demand for their services increased, another caste, the Velan came forward and shared the responsibility. The Velans at one time were the anti-sorcerers like the typical Atharva Vedis ; and when the demand for the antisorcery rites decreased, they supplemented the work of the Valans. When the demand still increased the Valan and the

Velan took Christian labourers as the second man at the saw. Similarly when the demand for tailoring increased the Christians filled up the breach.

The Kaniyan as a caste should be considered the best educated group on the Malabar coast. For everything that a Hindu in other parts of India runs to a Brahamana Pandit, a Malayalee runs to a Kaniyan. They are astronomers, astrologers, and physicians by profession. They are proficient in Sanskrit, in Hindu mathematics, Ayurvedic Sciences, antisorcery, and literature in general. On account of their learning, they are called in some parts of Malabar, 'Ezuth-achhan', or father of letters. It was one of them, Tunchan, who rendered into Malayalam lauguage, the Northern Epics of Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavata in a lyrical style, which may surpass even the original, in certain respects. If the people of Malabar know more about the sacred lore of the Hindus, the credit for it should go to this father of letters. They perform may antisorcery rites in the style of the Vedic Rishis, and on such occasions, they don a piece of cloth in the manner of the sacred thread, of which this appears to be the predecessor.

The Kammalan castes are five in number—(1) Asari (the carpenter, joiner, and architect all combined), (2) Musari (the founder and the brazier), (3) Kollan (the black-smith), (4) Thattan (the goldsmith), (5) and Kallan (the mason). Though the name of Kallan is often omitted from the list of Kammalan on the Malabar coast, they are always included in Tamil countries, where they

are known as 'pancalas', or five capables. The Kammalans are untouchables on the Malabar coast but they are not so in Tamil country, where they are, 'dvijas' or twice-born, and claim equality with the Brahmanas, though it is denied to them. The Kammalans of the Tamil country, like the weavers, would appear to have become twice-born or Brahmanas during the early days of Brahmanisation by accepting the sacred thread and Gayatri, and later on as they did not fit in with Brahmana pretensions they were left out on account of their profession. Perhaps, if the Kammalans of the Malabar coast had accepted the Brahmana baptism, they may not have been among the untouchables. The Kammalans on the Malabar coast are Matriarchal though there has been a tendency among the sons to stay and work with their fathers. They present one of the fundamental aspects of the Dravidian contribution to caste. Though the first four of these groups are known under four different castes, there is perfect equality of intermarriage and interdining among them, which would establish the purely professional basis of the caste. The words 'asari' and 'acarya' appear to have derived from the same root, and now though 'acarya' is applied only to the preceptors and Brahmanas the Asaris also function like the perceptors of the Vedic days when they perform certain rites and sacrifices, in the manner of the Vedic Rishis, at different stages in the construction of buildings and at their dedication. In northern India such rites are performed by the Brahmanas, but on the Malabar coast they are performed by the Asaris, even for the Brahmanas.

Next to the Kammalans come the professional castes of the Kshurakans or barbers, and Veluthetans or washermen. They serve only the castes higher to their own and their castes are separate from each other. Though they are untouchables to the Brahmanas, the Nairs are most lenient in that respect of untouchability.

The indigenous, or older Brahmanas should be classed among the professionals. They, in Middle Travancore, are called the Elayatu and Potti. The Elayatu is the 'purohit' or the priest of the Nairs, while the Potti is the priest of gods. The Elayatu officiates at the ceremonies intended for the departed ancestors, and Potti performs ceremonies that are intended for the gods. Though there is no intermarriage among them, the Elayatu will eat the food cooked by the Potti, but the Potti will never eat the food touched by the Elayatu, as he is considered to be of lower caste. At first both appear to have had the same status, but the inferiority of the Elayatu is due to his ministration to the departed ancestors. In Vedic days, as it is still the case among the aborigines there was no difference between the priests of gods and priests of spirits, both the spirits and gods were propitiated by the same priest or Rishi. Both live by their profession. The Elayatu receives his remuneration for each rite he conducts. The Potti was paid from the temple fund or property, which in course of time they appropriated to themselves. Now the Government in Travancore have taken over the property of most of the temples, and have brought their management under its control. Both the Pottis and

Elayatu are Patriarchies, most probably they have been the descendants of those Brahmanas, who came to Malabar with Parasu Ram, if they were not the indigenous people Brahmanised after the coming of the Nampuris.

The exact period of Namputi Brahman's arrival on the Malabar coast is not known; but they were there in the fourth century A. D. for it is known that they at that period joined hands with the Nair chieftains and seized the kingdom from the Chera king of Malabar. The Brahman supremacy on the Malabar coast should be considered as commencing from that date. After overthrowing the king of Chera, the whole country appears to have been divided between the Nampuris and the Nair chieftains. Some of the Nampuris even today receive Raja-bhoga, or king's dues from their subjects.

Malabar appears to have had a democratic form of government, which could even now be traced through the Kara-Yoga and other institutions. First the Brahmanas selected certain ruling families among the Nairs and made them Kshatriyas by giving them pedigrees descending from the Sun and the Moon. Those who first accepted the Brahman-made genealogy became Surya-vansa Kshatriyas, and those who later accepted such genealogy were made Soma-vansis, of a lower order. These bogus genealogies created a split among the Nairs, as it created a split among the people elsewhere in India. Then to create further disunion among the rank and file, they selected some obliging Nair families and raised their status, provided they performed menial services in the temples and

in Brahmana households. Many of their descendants still bear the hall-mark of this servitude. The social position of those who were not prepared to serve the Brahmanas became worse, and they became lower sub-castes among the Nairs. This appears to have been the antecedent of a sub-caste called 'Swarupam', which actually meant 'Sarkar' or government. The name itself will indicate that they were rulers once, or formed the aristocracy which ruled the land at one time. This is typical of what has happened more or less everywhere in India. The Brahmanas never established their supremacy on religious grounds; they did not interfere with the religion of others. The basis of their power has always been socio-political.

Before the coming of the Nampuris, the Nairs were the only leisurely caste. They were the owners of land and the possessers of slaves. They were the rulers and protectors of the state. Their fighting strength kept all the intruders away. Their landed possessions were extensive, the land was very fertile, the slaves worked for them assiduously, and the wealth they mainly held in trust for the public. They carried on trade with foreign countries. They sold their excess produce to the foreigners. The Egyptians, Chaldeans, Hebrews, Greeks and Romans were their best customers in the west and the Malayans and the Chinese on the east.

Before the Brahmanisation of Kerala, there does not appear to have been much distinction between the Nairs and other castes. Till the last century there were special festivals where caste was conspicuous by its absence, and all castes sat together

in the temple premises, and at the same food. These festivals were connected with Bhadra Kali temples, in some of which the Elayatha had been the chief priest, and the sacrificing priest was a Nair called Maran who was also the priest of the Nairs during the first fifteen days of the death ceremony, and whose 'Punyaham' or sacred water was like 'pancha gavya' of the Brahmanas and could purify them from pollution. Even at its worst, the untouchability between the Nairs and professional castes was threadbare. A sawyer and a carpenter could be touched with a piece of wood, a blacksmith by a piece of iron, and a 'father-of-letters' could be touched with an iron style and accidental touching of the barber or washerman did not involve a purificatory bath.

There is every indication to show that the professional castes originally were not different from the Nairs. The washerman is still known as the Veluthethat Nair, and it must have been his profession of washing the dirty clothes of others which made him classed among the untouchables. Profession has always been looked down upon by the aristocratic Nairs as something infra dig. There is a certain sub-caste of Nairs, who are looked down upon as their caste name is associated with the profession of pressing oil. Even among the semi-aboriginal castes, in Bihar, the oil pressing castes are considered inferior. The downfall of the Nairs today is due to their aversion to professions. When there was slavery, the slaves worked for them. After the abolition of slavery, the only alternative for them was to work; but they pre-

ferred not to demean themselves by work or soil their hands by manual labour. The consequence is that many an aristocratic family has become bankrupt. Selling properties, however extensive they might have been, and living on such proceeds, could not go on for ever. However, the Nairs still keep their respectability and prestige among the rest of the people. And it is entirely due to their casteless and non-sectarian behaviour towards others, including the Christians and Muslims, in the days of their glory.

Another particular feature of the caste system on the Malabar coast has been its accommodating nature. All were accommodated in its frame-work. Outsiders who came to the Malabar coast found their place in the caste ladder according to their profession or calling. The fusion and adoption among some has taken place to such an extent that it is impossible to know their antecedents or ancestry. How the Thiyas found an analogous position to the Pathiyans on account to their tree-climbing has already been stated. The Thiyas have left nothing to show they were foreigners or outsiders. The same happened in the case of Nampuri Brahmanas. They were outsiders, who came from somewhere in North India. Whence they came is not known. Their aversion to sea travel may indicate that they came by land. But no communities like them are found elsewhere. However, there are certain peculiar features that would give them a back reference. One is their caste-mark and the second is the one-sided inter-marriage, and the third is their brass bangles. Their

caste-marks indicate that they are the worshippers of Siva, Vishnu and Sakti, like the Brahmanas of Mithila, or that part of North Bihar, bounded by the three rivers, the Ganga, Gandak and Kosi ; they put three horizontal lines on the forehead with ashes indicating their devotion to Siva, vertical white sandlewood paste-marks representing their devotion to Vishnu and the red sandle-wood paste 'tilak' or dot representing their devotion to Sakti. Their one-sided intermarriage was with the Kshatriya and Sudra women, in the manner specified in Manu-Smriti, though responsibility to maintain the issue of such marriages did not arise on account of the matriarchal system among the Nairs and Kshastriyas. The Namputri women wear wide white brass bangles, as the aborigines wear in some parts of Bihar. However, due to their superior knowledge of the Vedas they came to occupy the topmost rung of the social ladder.

The special form of their Vedic religion is Mimamsa and many texts on Mimamsa that are found on the Malabar coast are written by them. Hence their emigration to Malabar should be considered as having taken place after the development of the Mimamsika School in Northern India.

When the Tamil Brahmanas came to Malabar, they occupied a position similar to that of the indigenous Brahmanas, but with no equality with them. Likewise the Tamil Sudras occupied a position like the Sudras of Malabar but with no equality with them. The Tamilians on the Malabar coast could be distinguished by the Tamil way of dressing and theTamil way of keeping the tuft of hair.

The Christian community gives another example of caste adoption. Cana Thomas, a Syrian merchant is said to have come to Malabar during the early centuries of the Christian era with a few colonists whom he picked up from the coastal towns where they were oppressed by their non-Christian rulers. They settled down in Travancore, made converts and multiplied. As their profession was trade and agriculture, they automatically found an appropriate rung for themselves in the caste ladder. The fact of their being Christians may have counted little with the Malayalees, but their profession and association with lower castes made them to occupy a step below the Nairs, but above all other Sudras. To the Nairs and Brahmanas they remained untouchable, while they observed untouchability with the Thiyas and Mannans, and unapproachability with the Parayans and the Pulayans, and considered themselves slightly superior to the artisan castes. When the Mohammadans came later in history, as their occupations were similar to those of the Christians, they also occupied a bracketed position with the Christians. However, untouchability between the Nairs and Christians had been threadbare in early days, and some sub-caste among the Nairs is said to have had Christian ancestry.

This would clearly indicate that the caste in Kerala in early days or so long as it was uninfluenced by Brahmanism, was mainly a kind of social adjustment based on profession or occupation, as would have taken place anywhere in a well-organised society, and the class seclusion was mainly in-

fluenced by group consciousness and occupational integrity. Though there were no guilds among them, professional and trade interests were safeguarded by caste formation. Castes always stood on their dignity and independence. Though carpenters and blacksmiths were socially the same, professionally they were separate; no son of a carpenter desired to become a blacksmith; though there was nothing which would have prevented him from doing so; as the custom was against it, none desired to go against the custom. The custom prevented black-legging in professions. No Izava agreed to fell the coconuts, though he was as much a climber of the coconut tree as the Pathiyan was. Each stuck to his profession, and for carrying out the work of each profession the members of the respective castes took up the responsibility. The Pathiyan went round from compound to compound, and brought down the coconuts in turn. When a house construction was entrusted to an Asari, he took the entire responsibility in finding the required number of craftsmen, fixing their wages, and seeing them carry out the work properly. There was no occasion to change a washerman for bad washing, for if he undertook to do the washing, he did it in the best possible way. No supervision over the work of any professional caste was required, the caste-pride made them turn out the best work. If they failed it could not have been intentional, but may have been due to their ignorance; but never was it due to their carelessness or neglect. People wonder at the thoroughness and the magnificence

of work done in ancient days. It was not due to the pressure brought on the workers; it was due to their pride in their own caste. A tailor's son would never fail his father, if he turned out bad work, it would have been his father who punished him and not the employer.

As the Kanyans were the most educated, they were most polite, and they never passed anybody without wishing him good luck. Even the Paraya on the road used to shout out his presence at the corners to avoid the customary pollution to others arising from his proximity. Such obedience to customs was not enforced by punishment but it was the expression of good-will on the part of all concerned. Even a Thiya or Christian was never known to have tried to violate the custom of the country, until they were influenced by political agitators.

In what light-hearted way they took caste, may be seen from the reforms that were effected within the last few years. The sub-caste distinctions among them have practically disappeared. Public places have been opened out to all castes alike; even the most unapproachable Paraya and Pulaya are allowed entry even in the most sacred temples though the Christians and Muslims are not. In social reforms Malabar is leading India, while rest of India is lagging far behind. Why? It was only the other day when a group of Harijans or suppressed castes, led by a High Court judge of a higher caste took a route march from U. P. to Bihar, in an attempt to create public sympathy in their cause. They were forbidden by villa-

gers on the way not only from drawing water from public wells, but even from drinking water to quench their thirst. Why is there this difference between U. P. and Malabar ? It is a question of religious and social background.

The background of caste in Malabar was mainly professional adjustment ; while its background in U. P. and elsewhere has been religion. For a correct appreciation of the difference between these two backgrounds, one should take his mind back to the early days of the Patriarchal system.

The Patriarchal system should be considered as beginning from that day the husband took his wife away from her mother's home to that of his father's. This in itself was very simple, but from the days of totem grouping, it brought on a significant change. Among the Totemists, it will be seen that after the marriage, the bride becomes a member of a different totem group or Kuli, as marriage within the same totem group is not allowed, like marriage in the same gotra among the Brahmanas. As stated before, from the day of her marriage, the bride automatically becomes the cherisher of her husband's totem and a non-cherisher of her father's totem. Likewise, from the same day, she becomes the worshipper of the ancestor spirits of her husband, and it will be her sons' duty to worship his father's gods, and care for his totem and ancestor spirits in the customary fashion of the Kuli.

When totem worship gave way to other forms of worship, the same procedure was followed, so

much so that even today, if a man belongs to a particular gotra, or follows a particular form of worship, it is because his father and grandfather did it before him. The question of conviction or personal preference does not arise. Hence the truth of the statement that one is a Hindu by birth and not by adoption or conversion. One's gods and preceptors are one's father's gods and preceptors, and what one's father did, the son must do, and he does it.

Though the religion of both the Matriarchies and Patriarchies originated in ancestor-worship, and though it is still mainly the religion of the Hindus, the ancestor worship among the Patriarchies run on a different line. Among the Matriarchies, the 'pitru-Kriya,' or the propitiatory rites for the departed ancestors do not rest with the sons, anybody who inherits the property may perform it. Their ancestors would appear to be satisfied with the propitiatory rites irrespective of the person who performs them. But among the Patriachies, it is essential that the son should perform such rites, and by a son begotten of a wife from a permissable gotra or Kuli, then only will the ancestors be benifited. If he leaves his 'gotra,' or kula or does anything which is contrary to his gotra traditions or family usages and customs, he becomes an out-gotra or out-caste and his propitiatory rites, however good and devoted he might be, will not reach his father or grandfather ; and in consequence thereof they will curse him and thwart him in every way. It is the fear of such consequences which makes a patriarchy Hindu not to violate any

of his 'gotra,' family or caste rules. The Matriarchies have no such fear from their ancestors. Their chief concern has been with their living elders. If they succeed in convincing them they could bring about any reform. It has been proved time after time. Their gods are the gods of all, irrespective of caste, Jati, or occupation, but the gods, ancestors and preceptors, whom the Brahmanas and other Patriachies among the Hindus worship, are their own, and they would not dare to risk their displeasure. This is the main reason why the Malayalees were able to achieve much in caste abolition. When the Brahmanas and other Brahmanised Hindus cry that their 'Dharma is in danger,' it does not mean that the national, racial, religious or vedic 'Dharma' is in danger ; it only means that their particular duty towards their Dharma or respective ancestor is in danger.

CHAPTER 12

UNTOUCHABILITY AND UNAPPROACHABILITY

The origin of untouchability may be traced back to pollution. Pollution would appear to have been observed first in connection with menstruation, and death. Both are mysterious occurrences, the first is terrifying and the second is stunning. The first appearance of menses puts many a young woman in hysterics, and it must have been horrible to see the frequent flow of blood when the wearing apparel may not have been better than leaves. The best solution that dawned on the primitive mind might have been to 'put her away'. Where? Not in the usual hut where the others sat, ate and slept, but in a different hut, or in some sequestered part of the main hut. She should not be allowed to move about by dropping the blood all over the place, certainly she should not enter the kitchen and prepare the food, and she should not defile her husband's apartment. Thus the first chapter in untouchability and unapproachability would appear to have started.

In many a well-to-do Nair home, a separate building or a room could be found for the women to sleep during the period of the menses, and also to be used as a Garbha-graha, or a labour-room at the time of child-birth. Even in the miserable habitations of the Oraons a separate hut made of twigs and straw for the purpose could often be found.

The woman's untouchability during this period was definite, as she was not to tend even her own children, though the unapproachability may not have been fixed by steps or distance, she was to keep at a respectable distance, and food and drink was served to her in the manner of a Brahmana serving a non-Brahmana even of a superior position.

The period of pollution was fixed in relation to the menstrual flow. Generally it is four days, but the Nairs allow a day more to be on the safe side, and they allow the women back to the family circle only after two purificatory baths, one on the fourth and the second on the fifth day. Some may yet show signs of discharge, in which case they will not be allowed to enter any sacred precincts in the house or temple until the flow completely stops.

The name given to menses in Malayalam is very significant, for it is 'purathu-maral' or shifting outside, or it is 'thintari', meaning unapproachability. This period of 'purathu-maral,' or shifting outside, is generally described as pollution period. But it is not 'pula' from which pollution or its Latin root 'Polluo' may have derived. The word 'pula' has its special application to the period of social ostracism which a family has to undergo after a death in the family.

'Pula' is observed by all in India, by Hindus and aborigines alike, though the period of observance may vary. The Dravidians observe it for

fifteen days, while the Brahmanas, like the aboriginal Kharias and Bhuyias, observe it for ten days. Among the Nairs, it is observed for fifteen days by all who claim descent from the same mother, even if they may be of the fortieth remove. Among the Brahmanas, the observance of 'pula' is according to the degree of relationship, and it may be 1 or 3 or 5 or 7 or 10 days. Among the Mundas, it is 3 or 5 or 7 days.

The pula observance is based on sanitary and health reasons, as the severity of it varies from natural to unnatural death. The natural death is due to illness of some kind or other, and naturally the members of the family will be attending the patient and be closely in contact with him. How is one to know whether they have received any infection from the dying person? A quarantine period, therefore, of a sufficient number of days is the best means of prevention. The Dravidians fixed at fifteen days and the Mundas at ten days. During this period if any other death or deaths would take place in the family, a fresh quarantine or pollution period should commence from that date. Further as a precaution against public infection, in certain communities like those of the Nairs, the dead body is not allowed to be touched by outsiders, it must be carried to the cremation or burial ground and disposed of by the members of the family, who will observe the pollution for the full period. Though many high class Hindus do not observe this injunction, the aboriginal tribes invariably follow this practice. That the dead body should be carried by the near relations was not enjoined

on sentimental grounds, but on consideration of public health. The practice is very ancient, starting long before man began to wear shoes. Hence even now the Hindu mourner walks barefooted by the side of the corpse on the way to the burning ghat irrespective of the distance.

'Valamma', is the period of pollution after child birth, by all belonging to the mother's family. It appears to have its origin in the menstruation and its culmination in 'pula'. There is no social ostracism during the period of 'Valamma', though there is the same religious restriction as in pula. The temple entry is prohibited during the period of both 'pula' and 'Valamma'. During the pula period, the whole family is considered untouchable. Even the nearest relations, if they came into personal touch with the blood relations of the dead, were to take a purificatory bath with complete immersion in a river or tank ; but for the Valamma period, there is no such stipulation. 'Valamma or Val-amma may mean amma or mother with a child, if 'Vala' is an earlier form of 'Bala', child. The number of days fixed for the Valamma period also differs ; for a Nair it is 15 days, for the Brahmana, as for a Nayadi or Paniyan, two of the very low castes on the Malabar coast, it is ten days ; for a Kurichan and Cheruman of South Travancore, it is 28 days ; and for a Kadan, it is 4 months. Kadans are said to have Negrito blood in them. Why should they observe more days of birth pollution than a Nair or Brahmana ? This appears to bring another element into birth pollution, namely, an occupational background. Kadans live in jungles

going from place to place, hunting and collecting forest produce. Their life is very arduous. Their wives or women-folk will not be in a fit condition to accompany them for a considerable time after child-birth. Therefore, it appears that a four months' rest has been imposed on them, to recuperate within the period and get hardy and strong before they accompany the rest of the group. Cheruman and Karichan are field labourers, as such a 28-day rest, for their women-folk after child-birth, appears to be a sound idea. On the same basis, the least number of days fixed for Brahmanas could be appreciated; for the Brahmana women especially of the Malabar coast are 'Antharjanas' or people of the interior, who never go out except for a bath in a nearby river, or on a visit to relations at marriage and such ceremonies. But the Nairs keep no 'purda', and their women are accustomed to go out freely, even on business almost as free and frequently as men.

Fast is an item which has contributed highly to untouchability and interdining. When one fasts, one should keep away from the rest of the family. A fasting Nair, for instance, will not eat the food cooked in his own kitchen, the food has to be cooked by himself, or by a relative provided he or she will also be observing the same fast. On these occasions the food is cooked in a special kitchen constructed or improvised for the purpose. What is true for the Nair, is true for the rest. On fasting days, even the meat-eating Kammalan is a strict vegetarian. Of all the fasts, the fast for Pitru-Kriya, is most rigorous, as the propitiatory effect

will depend more on the rigours of the fast. During the fast days, if one happened to touch any one after the purificatory bath, one would have to bathe again before one ate or drank.

Hence it will be seen that both untouchability and restrictions in interdining had commenced in one's own home. They commenced not only in Brahmana households, but in the homes of Sudras and all. But in the Brahmana households, they assumed tremendous proportions or took a disproportionate aspect. For the Brahmana's daily life from morning to midnight is a sacrament, while in a Sudra Nair's life, only one thing is a sacrament, namely, his oblations to his departed ancestors whether at the time of their death or at the death anniversaries, even marriage is not a sacrament for him. For a Brahmana, not only his Sudra wife is an untouchable, but even his own wife in certain conditions, and so on even certain parts of his own body. Under such circumstances, it is no wonder that he practises untouchability and unapproachability, with other Brahmanas and with those who are not Brahmanas.

The severity of his purificatory rites early in the morning will indicate how he braces himself against untouchability. Even before he answers the call of nature, he has to cleanse his mouth and wash his face. He must get up with his thoughts on the deity of his devotion (Ishtadevata). He should open his eyes on something auspicious. To avoid the probability of not having such a thing available, he treats his right hand as such. He looks at his right hand, meditates on his fingers

and thumb as Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, his palm as Sarasvati, the goddess of learning and the back of his hand as Brahma the creator. It was no wonder that a Brahmana Pandit who shook hands with (Lord) Macaulay rubbed his hand with sand as a first step in purificatory rites. Then having fixed his mind on these divinities, and his eyes on their visible representatives, he rises with an apology to 'Prithvi' the goddess of earth, for treading upon her. Then he washes his hands and face and cleanses the mouth preparatory to touch the sacred thread and winds it round his neck and places its loose loop over the right ear. It is in this position of the sacred thread and only in this position of it that a twice born can answer the calls of nature. A Maharaja once forgot in a hurry to readjust the sacred thread after he had been to the bathroom and appeared at a reception which caused a great deal fo concern to his host who was the Governor fo a Province. After the calls of nature, sand in the left hand and water in the right, he cleans himself of Bromo paper. Hindus in general hate performing such unclean actions, the defiled hands themselves have to undergo purification, the left hand should undergo cleansing ten times and the right hand seven times each according to the nature of its offence, and lastly both together five times, with sand and water. Then he cleanses the soles of the feet three times preferably rubbing on a stone, and then the mouth, rinsing it twelve times. During all these operations the Brahmana is not allowed to speak to any one, but if he de-

sires to speak, he should bring down the sacred thread and its neutral position by letting it hang on the neck like a necklace. The next step in purification is the cleaning of the teeth and tongue. Then the bath is to be commenced with a prayer by standing in some depth of water. The waist depth of water is considered to be most essential. Once when a Maharaja from Malabar came to Allahabad, a special concrete tank for his immersion had to be constructed in the compound of a bungalow hired for his temporary residence of two days. This Maharaja being a non-Brahmana it is not known whether he was privileged to repeat the Brahmana 'mantra' before he took his dip. The special Brahmana mantra, or sacred hymn for the purpose runs thus:

"I (the reciter's name in full) on this day (......) of the year (......) of the month (......) at the time (......) take this bath to remove my sins of body, mind, speech and touch, and to gain success in everything I undertake today". Then the first dip and the other dips are to follow, while 'Mardana', rubbing of the body and the limbs is to proceed with other prayers to remove all sins from touch, and to give strength to keep the body holy. These are all preparations for prayer and further rites to propitiate his special deity preceptors of the 'gotra' and departed ancestors. All these would take a considerable time, and they should be done before taking the first meal of the day, which itself is a sacrament. Every devout Brahmana is to perform all these at least twice a day, though three times a day would be better.

Hence it will be seen that untouchability had its origin in hygiene first and then in religion. Though the hygienic aspect is long forgotten, its religious aspect still continues.

From untouchability to unapproachability, it is not a far cry. Unapproachability should be considered as beginning in the kitchen from the days of totem worship, and taking its final shape in the next most sacred or exclusive place, namely, the temple. Those, who are only acquainted with the north Indian temples, may fail to appreciate this point. The north Indian temples are generally in the most crowded parts of the city, town or village, where it is impossible to practise unapproachability and where the dirt and squalor are such that no principles of public health and sanitation on which unapproachability was once based, can have any bearing.

For the purpose of studying unapproachability one may take a trip to Malabar, where the temple area is divided into four rectangular 'Vithis' or rounds. The innermost area that generally consists of three squares is the holiest. In this area there are two buildings, unconnected with each other, the most important one is called Sri Kovil, and the other Mandapam with a passage between. In the centre of the innermost recess of the Sri Kovil is the image, and as such Sri Kovil is the holy of holies, where even the officiating priest or Potti is not allowed to enter until after many 'washings and purifications', that too only when he makes offerings to the image, two or three times

a day. The Sri Kovil in plan may be square, octagonal or circular with an inner and outer annular chamber. The Mandapam is a detached porch with the whole floor raised into a platform. In North India this porch will invariably be found attached to the Sri Kovil, with a continuous floor. The Mandapam is now generally an unoccupied place, but it is reminiscent of the council chamber, where the elders sat in deliberation before the days of Brahmanism. The passage between the two is for the purpose of a near view of the diety. In this passage, a distinction between the Brahmana and non-Brahmana appears. The right side of the passage is for the Brahmanas to approach and the left side is for the Sudras. Another distinction in caste can also be seen here. The Pujari or the officiating priest, in distributing 'prasada' or sanctified articles like flowers, sandal-wood paste, fruits and sweets, gives them to the Brahmanas in their hands and to the Sudras, they are to be thrown on the floor. Though this is not generally practised in Northern India now, it could be easily seen when a Brahmana gives a feast to non-Brahmanas. On such occasions without any stretch of imagination it can be said that the food is not served but it is thrown to them though not on the floor, on a plaited leaf.

The second round in the temple is the ambulation Vithi for the devotees to go round in an attitude of prayer or meditation, and the third round is actually the area of the temple outhouses, where the food is prepared for the Brahmanas and gods. This is an exclusive area wherever it is

built, except for through passages for the devotees to go in and out. Built in with the outhouses there will always be a huge hall, which is known as Bali-pura or house for sacrifice, with a high stone platform known as Bali-kallu or sacrifical stone. Neither the non-Brahmana devotee nor the temple priest is allowed to enter these precincts without a purificatory bath. Thus these temple precincts became places of unapproachability and non-entry even for the Brahmanas unless they are specially prepared for it.

The fourth Vithi or round is the processional Vithi, where the Sudras have access without restriction, provided they are not banned by death, birth or other pollutions. The periphery of this area is marked by a wall, within which no lower castes such as Kammalan, Thiyan or Pathiyan can have admission. The Kammalans can come to the wall, though the Thiyans and the Pathiyans would be required to stand at some distance from it. In temples of medium size, these Vithis and respective places of approach in a way specify the distance of unapproachability. The processional Vithi can be called Sudra Vithi, and in the same way the Vithi of the temple outhouses as the Brahman Vithi. As the partition between these two Vithis is only a wall, it emphasises and signifies the untouchability that exists between the Brahmana and the Sudra. The Kammalan and others of equal untouchability to the Sudras are not allowed in the processional Vithi, as this Vithi is separated only by a wall from the area of approach by the Kammalans. This wall emphasises

the untouchability between the Sudras and the Kammalans on the one hand, and the width of the processional Vithi on the other hand specifies the distance the Kammalans should keep away from the Brahmanas. The Kammalan limit of approach is also the same as specified for the Christians and Muslims in a Hindu temple, indicating that the Sudras observe unapproachability towards them. As the Thiyas and Pathiyans are to keep some distance away from the boundary, these distances also indicate the unapproachability they are to observe between themselves and the Sudras, and these distances plus the width of the Sudra Vithi will indicate the extent of their untouchability to the Brahmanas. The Parayas and the Pulayas have to observe their respective distances of unapproachability from this boundary wall. The distances of unapproachability and the degree of untouchability specified and shown in the temple construction, are observed by the respective castes in their respective homes, and public places.

As the temples are dedicated to gods, the violation of the rules of untouchability and unapproachability became an offence against gods. One may not hesitate to commit an offence against a higher caste, but in doing so if he fears that he is committing an offence against god, he will think twice before incurring the displeasure of the gods whom he may worship. This psychology among the Hindus is the secret of their submission to caste rules and restrictions. As long as this psychology remains unchanged, the caste system will continue inIndia. How deep-rooted this psychology is can be

seen from the reluctance even among the Christians to invite high class Hindus to their home and ask them to share a meal, and how reluctant the unapproachables are to enter even a Sudra's home, even when they are invited to do so. Even in Northern India, where unapproachability is not in existence, there is a reluctance on the part of the depressed classes to enter inside the house of a caste Hindu or to be in his apartments with an air of equality. It may be that this psychology has been created by the Brahmanas, but in the maintenance thereof, even the depressed classes are equally responsible. Though it may have been Brahmana-made, the Brahmana himself is afraid of breaking these rules, for fear of annoying his ancestor spirits and his gods. A Brahmana feels, to the same extent as a Chammar or Paraya, if he breaks any of the caste rules for he will incur the displeasure of his gods and ancestors, and be risking his future in paradise.

As untouchability and unapproachability have commenced in the temple, if one is serious about its removal, he should begin it in the temples. Opening out temples to the untouchables and unapproachables will be a step in the right direction, but it will not solve the problem, though it has done a great deal in Kerala even beyond expectation.

The Brahmana objection to opening out the temples for the lower castes is often said to be on account of their unclean habits. The Brahmana may bathe or wash more times than a depressed class man, but that does not appear to make him

any cleaner than a Harijan. The Brahmanas and the Brahmanised Hindus can claim to be the most bathed people in the world. But their standards of cleanliness and sanitary habits are very low in comparison with the standards of other advanced, though less bathed nations of the world. Many a Harijan can be found keeping as high a standard of cleanliness as the Brahmanas, nay, even a higher standard, even then, they do not get any more privileges or considerations. Some complain of their bad habits such as meat-eating and drinking. Are all the Brahmanas free from these ? These cannot, therefore, be considered as substantial reasons. The real reasons for it should be looked for elsewhere, and algae formations, and these in layers often have to be parted with the hands before attempting an immersion. The tank is seldom emptied unless it is silted up with mud washed down from the surrounding area. The water is seldom replenished, except by rain. It is the bath in such tanks that stands for physical and spiritual purity. The Harijans or lower castes had no approach to these tanks. At Kottayam, in Travancore, once a European, unknowingly passed through a path between the temple and its tank, there was great hue and cry that the temple and the tank had lost their sanctity, it was not restored until many changes had been effected and adequate purificatory ceremonies had been performed. It is the sense of purity such as this that stands in the way of the Harijans.

As the temples were used in regulating caste system, they may be used for destroying it as well.

The best way will be to rebuild them, as places where any one and every one can have admission without any customary purification, without any hindrance, nay, even with shoes and clothes on. At present nakedness of the feet, nakedness of the head, and nakedness of the body are chief attributes to holiness, and essential requirements for entry into the temples. These should never be the ideals for the future. In the new types of the Hindu temple, there should be no caste, bar racial bar, religious bar or clothing bar. Then all may have a chance to see and to know what an admirable religion Hinduism is.

In Travancore though the temples are open for all the untouchables and unapproachables, no Christian is allowed admission. It was only a little while ago that a big riot took place when a Christian boy unwillingly found himself in company of his Hindu friends within the outer wall of a temple to see a procession that was in progress. If temples are places of God why should not they be open to all? One should appear in places of God meek and submissive, but not in dirt and nakedness. If Hinduism has lost its hold on liberal-minded Hindus, it is entirely on account of its crudity, nudity and antiquated outlook.

CHAPTER 13

THE DEMOCRATIC ASPECT OF CASTE

Every caste within itself is a perfect democratic unit. Individuals enjoy perfect equality in their respective castes. Wealth gives no special privilege and property gives no disadvantage within the caste; the rich and the poor are equal, master and servant serve each other. The servants sit down with the master and the master and the servant are both served at the same time even by the women-folk of the masters. At functions where the master is the host, the servants with the rest of the community should be fed first before the master is permitted to eat.

Though a rich father or mother would always try to get a rich husband for the daughter, even a poor servant, if he belongs to the same caste is eligible for the daughter's hand. Kings and rulers have often selected influential individuals from the castes for special honours and titles, but the receipt of such honours has seldom created any special advantage within caste, except for the fact that one may receive a special seat in the assembly, not as superior to others of the community but as one who is honoured by the rulers.

The caste laws are traditions, and they are enforced by the elders. The elders are not elected by vote, but they are so by common consent. The able ones become the leaders of the community. The elders meet whenever there is any occasion for it. The elders sit in common with the rest.

The caste assembly is both deliberative and administrative. Before any decision is reached the opinion of all those who are prepared to give it is taken. No vote is taken but the opinion of the majority prevails. Differences may arise, but if they cannot be amicably settled, they are referred to a third party whose decision will invariably be accepted by both parties. The third party may consist of one or more respectable members of the locality. The third party may belong to a higher, lower or equal caste. Justice, impartiality and respectability are the qualifications for the members of the third party. Even kings may be approached to give a decision. As a king is bound by virtue of his position to maintain law and order, and to rule according to customary laws of each and every caste or community, to approach him for a ruling in caste affairs is nothing but natural. But he has no authority to interfere in caste affairs, unless he is approached for a ruling, or unless the attitude of certain castes or certain sections of them is obnoxious to others.

Some authors are inclined to think that ultimate authority on caste affairs rested with the rulers. Their views are also substantiated by historic instances. In the 12th century A. D. Ballal Sen, king of Bengal, fixed the order of precedence among different sections of the Brahmanas in his realm. In the 14th century Hara Singh Deva, ruler of North Bihar, "settled respective ranks of the three sections of the Mithila sub-castes of Brahmanas and made marriage rules for them." The Maharaja of Cochin is the final authority in caste

disputes among the Nampuri Brahmanas. But Ballal Sen and Hara Singh were non-Brahmanas. likewise the Cochin Royal family is also non-Brahmana. As such they could never have interfered with the Brahmana caste affairs, unless these kings have been approached as the guardians of law and order. Even in recent years, contending parties could be found taking their caste quarrels to the civil courts. No court or king could force one to invite another and to eat with him by sitting on the same 'mat'. Some quote the conditions in Nepal, where the state took cognizance of caste offences, but there anything might have happened when the monarchical authority was usurped by hereditary Prime Ministers. Once a Maharaja of Manipur (Assam) outcasted his own Maharani. In that case he was sitting in judgment as the head of his caste, as well as the appellate authority in the capacity of the king. It is true that no expulsion from the Nampuri community could be valid without the approval of the Maharaja of Cochin ; there he does not act as an autocrat, but as a custodian of law and order to ensure that all traditional formalities have been observed before the decree of outcasting has been passed by the elders of the offender's own community.

In quarrels or contentions between caste and caste, an appeal to the rulers often had a salutary effect. Over a century ago barbers of a certain locality in Travancore refused to shave the Syrian Christians. For some time, the Christians had to go without shaving which according to their custom was complete shaving of the head and face.

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Then with long hair and bearded faces they appealed to the Brahman Raja of the locality. Though he had no magisterial powers, the barbers agreed to his ruling; and they are still shaving the Christians, despite the fifty years or more of Hindu-Christian strife in Travancore. Some wandering tribes would appear to be the descendants of those who left the civilisation dissatisfied with the ruling given by the rulers. Abbe Dubois speaks of Pakanathis of Mysore and the Carnatic as a tribe who took to a nomad life, as they did not get redress to an insult given to one of their headmen by the governor of the province.

The violation of caste rules may often create a new caste. Illegitimate or illegal sexual relations may cause the nucleus of new caste formations; illegimate relation between a Brahmana woman and a Sudra man may create a new caste, Dharmasastras as well as the Arthasastras give many instances of such caste formations. In Kautilya's Arthasastra the following instances are given—

					New Caste.
Brahman	father	and	Vaisya	mother	Ambashta
Brahman	,,	,,	Sudra	,,	Nishasha or Parasva
Kshatriya	,,	,,	Sudra	,,	Ugra
Vaisya	,,	,,	Sudra	,,	Sudra
Kshatriya	,,	,,	Brahman	,,	Suta
Ugra	,,	,,	Nishada	,,	Kukkutaka
Nishadha	,,	,,	Ugra	,,	Pulkasha
Ambastha	,,	,,	Vaidehaka	,,	Vainya
Vaidekaka	,,	,,	Ambashta	,,	Kusilava
Sudra	,,	,,	Brahman	,,	Ayogava
Sudra	,,	,,	Kshatriya	,,	Kshatta
Sudra	,,	,,	Vaisya	,,	Chandala

Few of these castes are known now by these names. Evidently they have changed their names or assumed new occupational names. A tendency to adopt occupational names will be seen even in the Arthasastra ; where it is stated that a Vainya, "becomes a Rathakara, or chariot-maker, by profession, members of this caste shall marry among themselves, both in customs and avocations they shall follow their ancestors, they may either become Sudras, if they are not born as Chandalas" (Kau : Arth : 165).

The mixed marriages such as these were once legitimate ; the laws for disinheriting children from such marriages were of later origin. Even the illegitimate sons known as Antaralas, were to have equal divisions of inheritance in parity with legitimate sons. "In the case of sons such as Suta, Magadha, Vratya and Rathakara, inheritance will go to the capable ; and the rest will depend upon him for sustenance. In the absence of the capable, all will have equal shares" (Kau : Arth : 163). But "partition of inheritance shall be made in accordance with the customs prevalent in the country, caste, society (sangha), or the village of the inheritors" (Kau : Arth : 165).

It is interesting to see that caste and custom were given such importance even during the days of the Mauryan Emperors. If caste was an imposition by a higher caste on the lower ones, such undeviated adherence to the customs of the caste would not have taken place. The caste rules and traditions were formulated and maintained by the respective castes. It was only when their privile-

ges were threatened, that they referred to secular or higher authorities for protection. The caste within itself has been a close-knit corporation though without a permanent head nor any written constitution. Every one knows its privileges, its advantages and disadvantages. To break away from caste due to disadvantages is seldom attempted, for its advantages are much greater. Especially as the members of different castes live in independent isolation, the disadvantages one may feel are more imaginary then real. It is only when one hunts for public posts and government service, that one's caste may stand against him. There too it is a question of privileges. It may be that the members of one caste or a particular group thereof, may have preponderance in some posts, or in certain offices, then an entry of an outsider will be resented, especially if the post is a lucrative one. Though this is the practice everywhere, it takes up undue magnitude in a caste-ridden India. Caste is not the only operative factor in this, for provincialism plays even a greater part. In the spheres of works specified for respective castes there is little provincialism. A carpenter from the Punjab could easily find a job in Bengal. There is no competition between a washerman and barber for each other's job. Competitions are in respect of highly salaried posts, or posts with unduly high salaries often with little work. In such cases it is but natural for a Kayastha, to select a Kayastha for a lucrative post, and for a Kashmiri or Tamilian to favour one of his own caste or tribe.

In a non-capitalistic state there could be no

strife between caste and caste. If each has to work and if each is to receive adequate remuneration, there will be no strife between caste and caste. As long as India remained non-capitalistic, there was no caste problem. Unequal distribution of wealth is at the bottom of all caste problem now.

In olden days India appears to have had an ideal type of socialism when Kara or Kuram was the unit of local administration. A Kara was a much wider area than a gramam (village). In a Kara, families of all castes and professions lived side by side. The Brahmanas were there to do pujas in the temples, and special sub-castes were there to assist them in their duties. The Purohits were there to minister them at the death ceremonies and death anniversaries. The Kammalans were there to build houses, and to make ploughs, utensils and ornaments for all. The Sudras were there to see that all the Kara land was cultivated and tanks and canals for the irrigation were maintained, and to see that cultivation was done in proper time and grains were carefully stored in granaries. The grain or produce collected by the Sudras or farmers was for the use of all. Each had a share according to the nature of the work rendered. The labourers and workers received it as daily wages, the Brahmanas and priests got it as honorariums. There was always some work to be done for some one or the other. New houses had to be built, old ones had to be repaired, new trees had to be planted, the patients had to be treated, workers were always in demand. On the other hand, if there was no work, because of heavy rain or flood,

the workers had only to go to the excess grain storers who were always ready to meet the demand of those who were lacking in subsistence. It was not begging, it was a legitimate demand. Such demands were met with the hope of nothing in return, not even with the expectation of thanks or gratitude. In such an atmosphere of social economy, there was no difference in the standard of living. Each one had his own house. Some houses were small while others were big, but each was according to his own requirements. A daily worker had no need to have a granary or storage accommodation. One who had no occasion to entertain lavishly and had no need for a big dining hall or a guest house. There was not much difference between the diet of the rich and the poor. As the Government could not be run on nothing, and no public utility work could be undertaken without money or means, the cultivators and other property owners had to pay taxes, but the taxes were collected in kind as far as possible, which always were a portion of the net produce. The taxes collected were kept as far as practicable in local treasuries of respective Karas, made available for use by the state for general purpose. Under this type of socialism there was no strife between caste and caste, each caste and each individual of the caste, worked for the common good. The workers realised that their well-being depended on the prosperity of the land-holders and those who held land knew that their prosperity and well-being depended on the workers. It was in such surroundings that caste system originated and flourished.

This happy state of affairs came to an end under foreign domination, under heavy extraction by the rulers, under selfish money-lenders and entrepreneurs of labour and capital. Under this new regime, caste lost its economic advantage ; labour lost its mastery and dignity. Art, craft and architecture deteriorated. The country became dependent on foreign capitalism and commercialism. Yet caste holds its own.

CHAPTER 14

HOW CASTE IS MAINTAINED

Caste is maintained neither by the Laws of the State nor by the Ordinances of the Realm. It is maintained by customs, manners, tokens and rites. The first disintegrating element in caste was the 'dvija' baptism, which drew a line between the twice-born and those who were not twice-born. The next was based on totemic heritage and the third on occupational differences. The outward symbol of 'dvija' has been the sacred thread, which stands for power and privilage in higher classes, and leads to ridicule among the lower classes like the weavers and Kammalans. The totemic aspect is still maintained by the Gotras among the higher castes and by Kulis and Septs among the aborigines. The occupational differences are maintained chiefly by professions, though profession in higher group is no criterion to their caste. Among the lower classes, profession settles the caste, while in higher castes, profession influences little. A Brahmana may take up any profession including that of 'Chaprasi', or a liveried servent to be at the beck and call of even a Sudra, it does not interfere with his 'dvija', or Brahmanhood. A Kammalan may become a 'dvija', yet he may have no more privilege than a carpenter or blacksmith. These may be called the horizontal divisions of caste ; but the vertical divisions have most disin-

tegrating effects on the nation. The chief elements in the vertical divisions are state, locality and religion.

None of these divisions are stationary or static. Each element and its combinations create new castes, and they in permutation and combination multiply the castes in geometric proportion. The result is that there are over 3,000 recognised castes in India, and half as many non-recognised.

The main cognisance of caste as stated earlier is the Kitchen. Four thousand castes would mean four thousand different kitchens, a great drawback to the growth of hotels and restaurants. Even in military camps, different kitchens have become unavoidable. All have to be fed on caste and diet basis. The Madrasi Brahmanas should be fed differently from Kashmiri Brahmanas, and all Brahmanas differently from the Mahars and other lower castes. The vegetarians should be fed differently from the non-vegeterians. Even among the meat-eaters, the meat supplied should conform to the respective views they hold in the manner of killing the animal. Even preserved vegetable and fruits will not be acceptable to many, if in the process of preservation they happen to be handled by workers of non-acceptable castes. What a strain the caste causes on quarter-masters and their staff, and how many of the fighting men are diverted for the preservation of caste rules and prejudices even in fighting lines are matters of common knowledge. A common mess and a common table create comradeship and brotherhood everywhere. Are the Indian fighting forces to be

deprived of this unifying force for ever? Though men of different castes fought efficiently under the command of the casteless Britishers, what would be the attitude of men under the command of officers with caste, is for the future to see. Due to caste and creed distinctions, it is impossible to have an even uniform dress acceptable to all fighting forces.

The visible signs of caste may be grouped under the following heads:

(*a*) Differences in caste marks.

(*b*) Differences in growing and dressing the hair.

(*c*) Differences in dress.

(*d*) Differences in ornaments, incisions on the nose and ears.

Caste marks on the forehead and the body emphasise sectarian differences. The Vaishnavites (the Acharya sect), for example, have representation of Vishnu's foot marked in clay on the forehead. The Saivites will have their forehead, arms and chest marked with broad lines of ashes. Ordinary Vaishnavites have their forehead marked with sandal pasts. Those who worship Vishnu and Siva will have the ashes and sandal paste on their forehead. The Sakti worshippers mark their foreheads with a red dot. Then the Brahmana way of wearing these marks will often vary from the non-Brahmana or Sudra ways; and there will also be local and provincial variations in them.

A tuft of hair on the back of the head is the

usual sign of a Hindu, though it varies in size from a big bunch in Tamil countries, to an apology for one in Northern India. The Malayalees, all without any difference in caste, have their tuft on the crown, the Tamils have it at the back of the head, while the Tulus have it half-way between the Tamil and Malayalee ways. The full growth of hair like that of the Oraons, as well as the complete shaving of the head like that of the Syrian Christians are both signs of holiness among the Hindus. The old Dravidian style was to have a full head of hair, while the Munda style was clean shaven. All the intermediate ways of keeping the hair would appear to have had their origin in the restriction imposed by Sagara king of Ayodhya on foreign settlers in his kingdom.

In every country, the dress is primarily to suit the climate, but in India, it varies according to the caste, even in the same locality. Before the Mohammedan conquest, respect for elders appears to have been shown by uncovering one's head. In places like Malabar, where no kind of head gear was in vogue, probably being least influenced by Mohammadans, the sign of respect was to uncover the upper part of the body. The semi-nakedness there that has not fully disappeared appears to have its origin in this custom. The Brahmanas all over India are privileged to go about naked more than others. Nakedness is a symbol of respect and holiness in India. Carelessness in dress and disregard for conventions often add to the respectability of an individual in India. In countries like England, it is just the reverse, there a gentle-

man is known by his dress. Medals and insignias are worn over the clothing in cold climates for distinction; in hot countries, the mark on the body appears to have been the chief means of distinction. Painting and disfiguring must have had the same effect behind them.

However, whatever dress is worn, and how it is worn distinguished the one caste from the other and each race from the rest. A standard length of 'dhoti' worn by a Madrasi differs from the way that is worn by a Bengalee, which again varies from the U. P. way. Then each caste in each locality has its own variations. The Malayalee women used to prefer pure white, the Tamils seem to gloat all colours, while nothing but a dirty or unbleached colour is considered respectable among the lower castes in the U. P.

As the sign of 'dvija' baptism is the sacred-thread, the sign of Hindu baptism is piercing the ears. Before piercing the ears, a child has no caste, and no child is expected to observe any of the caste rules. Before the ears are pierced, a Brahmana child could eat from the hands of a Sudra, a Sudra child could eat from the hands of a Christian. The lower lobes of the ear receive special attention, large holes, with heavy discs were the fashion in ancient days. Now the holes have become much smaller, yet it is most essential as it is one of the main items that distingusshes a Hindu from a non-Hindu. The variations in ear-ings and nose-rings differentiates the caste as well as the race. Each caste and each province has its special kind of jewellery, and some differ-

ence in the way of wearing it as well, so much so it is possible for an experienced eye to distingush and determine the caste and place to which a person belongs.

As long as such outside signs of caste exist, the emphasis on caste will remain. The Hindu ladies, however are evolving gradually a common type of dress and ornaments, so much so among the educated ladies, that it is becoming more and more difficult to distingush a Brahmana from a non-Brahmana, and a Hindu from a christian; it is refreshing to see that even Christian and Muslim ladies have taken to the characteristic Hindu dot on the forehead. But the men are still very backward in developing a uniform standard in dress. Through European influence a uniform type of working or office dress was becoming common but since the Day of Independence, a setback to the provincialism and caste is well in evidence. In Europe, men dress for dinner, in India they undress before taking meals.

'Panchagavya' is the main rite by which caste is maintained. Minor caste offences, such as foreign travel, eating from the hands of a prohibited person, may well be remedied by purification with 'pancha-gavya' accompanied by suitable rituals. But for more serious offences, out-casting is the only remedy. Pancha-gavya as the name indicates is a mixture of five products from the cow, namely, milk, curd, ghe, dung and urine. The modern substitute for it is 'panchamruta' in which the last two articles are substituted by honey and sugar. But the orthodox do not consider the substituted

mixture is as efficacious as the original one. Sprinkling of this mixture on the head and drinking a few drops of it will remove all the sins of omission and commission; but it will have no such property if it is not made by a Brahman with the repetition of suitable 'mantras'. Many distinguished I. C. S. officers on return from England have had to undergo this manner of purification, and give a feast to the brethren of their caste before caste-equality was restored to them. A refusal to undergo these rites has only one alternative, namely, out-casting of the offender and his family. A distingushed scholar, on return from England refused to undergo this purification, and in consequence thereof, he was denied by the ruler of a state the privilege of worshipping in Hindu temples.

This manner of purification appears to have its origin among the aborigines. Among the Oraons, if a woman marries in the prohibited Totem sept, or a rank-outsider, she will be outcasted, untile she gives up her husband and undergoes propitiatary rites. According to their custom she has to drink the warm blood of a fowl and give a feast to the members of her community. Among the Hindus too, the reconciliation feast is most essential, and it stands for the most cherished privilege of interdining. On such occasions the reclaimed party will be allowed to sit with the general body of the caste or sept and be served on equal footing. When non-Branmanas perform such rites, gifts to Brahmanas were considered essential. When a family was to be raised from a lower sub-

caste to a higher sub-caste, a similar procedure used to be followed; on such occasions money in silver and preferably in gold had to be served to the members of the higher caste. On the Malabar coast, lower class Nairs are said to have become high caste Nairs in this fashion. There the Nairs too, have become Brahmanas in this fashion.

The greatest weapon that caste possesses is excommunication. But it is not applied indiscriminately. Against the delinquent, it is applied only as a last measure. There are certain offences that are not pardonable, which cannot be atoned for even by the rite of Panchagavya. They are sex offences. Unlawful sex relationship is the greatest offence against caste. Among the Brahmanas of Malabar, even if the misconduct is between eligible couple, out-casting is the inevitable punishment. Among the Sudras if the couple is eligible and if they agree to get married, they may be pardoned. But if it is an intercaste misconduct, atonement will serve no purpose, excommunication is the only remedy. In many parts of India the Brahmana's misconduct with lower castes are condoned; but on the Malabar coast the Brahmana's misconduct with a woman of the professional castes will result in the excommunication of both. The lower the order, the greater is the strictness against any sort of misalliance, with the members of other castes. Misalliance with higher castes is bad, but misalliance with lower castes is worse, which in a way will indicate that caste is not an imposition by any one from above. A European's misconduct with a Negro woman will be condoned; but

Malaviya has no say in the affairs of a Banerji, and a Potti has no say in the affairs of a Pattar. A Khori manages his own caste affairs and a Mehtar manages his own. A master cannot interfere in the caste affairs of a servant, though the caste can set a servant against his own master. An obliging servant of the writer one day in violation of his caste rules, carried a tiffin-carrier across a station platform. This was noted by another servant; though his caste rules would have allowed him to do such work, he took note of the event. Months passed. The obliging servant went to his distant village , some 350 miles away, to fetch his wife. His wife's people would not deliver the wife; for, they heard that he had carried a tiffin-carrier and thereby lost his caste. Fortunately for him he had some money saved up, his master also helped. He did the necessary propitiatory rites and gave his brethren a feast. The amount the poor fellow had to spend was more than his salary for six months. As to the caste of that obliging servant, it must be said that no other servant including a Mohammedan driver in his master's employ will eat anything or drink even water touched by him. This is caste in a nutshell. Why should the Brahmanas alone be blamed for it?

Caste oppresses the high and low alike. Even the king cannot go against the decision of his caste But it had many advantages. No Hindu would like to be without a caste. About a century and a half ago Abbe Dubois said that it was a great insult for a Hindu to be called one without a caste.

It is true even now. Why! A Hindu without caste is a lost sheep; he has no local standing. Inside the caste, he has an assured position, irrespective of his financial status. As a member of the caste, he has perfect equality with his brethren. His fraternity will fight for his cause, and they will see that his rights and interests are safeguarded. They will always help him to find a suitable wife. All family differences will invariably be smoothed over by the elders of the caste, without recourse to a court of law. Though there will be dissensions in the caste, when it is a question of infringement of caste rites or privileges, the whole caste will stand by him, however insignificant may be his position in the caste. The caste support given to a culprit is often stigmatised by superficial observances as defective sense of fair play and responsibility among the Indians. But more often than not, it is based on caste obligations; and truly indicative of the solidarity of caste.

Every caste is a true democratic unit. Though there will be no general election and selection of the leaders by vote, the fit and capable do always lead the community. The unwritten law of the caste is enforced most relentlessly. Violation of caste rules is a serious offence, punishable by fines or ostracism, but there will be no offence which cannot be mitigated by yielding to the wishes of the community. Before the days of the foreign rule, kings as well as the judges adjudicated matters and dispensed justice according to the traditions of the respective caste.

CHAPTER 15

CASTE AS A NATIONAL ASSET

Caste has always been an organic element in the national life of India. It has had its advantages. It restrained aimless activities among young men, and led their energies through specified channels for specialisation. Art and craft, arts and science advanced through caste specialisation. Though caste limited the horizon, freedom for individuals to take up any profession they liked was not denied unless by doing so no customary law was violated. Customs did not prevent any one from taking up any honourable profession or calling but certain mental works were tabooed even among the lowest of castes only because their ancestors were not accustomed to do such works.

A Brahmana's duty allotted by custom was the study of the Vedas, teaching others and doing sacrifices for them ; but there was no objection if he had become an architect, a sculptor, a merchant or, cultivator, though he may have been outcasted if he followed the profession of a Chamar in skinning the carcase and curing skins. It was not because the Brahmana was debarred from killing animals, skinning carcasses and cooking the meat for his dinner and oblation to his ancestor spirits, but the taboo against the profession of the Chammars had arisen out of its constant dirty and unclean nature. So is the objection to the profession

of a 'Thotti,' or scavenger. A miner, straight from the coal mines, cannot be expected to be received in one's drawing room. Likewise there was no objection even for a Sudra to become the teacher of the Vedas, and for any of the lower castes to take up a literary profession. Even the Brahmanas have shown readiness to study Philosophy and religion from the Parayas.

Caste specialisation is that which has made India what it had been. Caste kept the Hindu traditions and culture intact for thousands of years. Even the foreign domination for the best part of a thousand years has done little to obliterate them. The Peruvian culture disappeared at the first onslaught of the European invasion. India maintained hers all through the proselytising periods of the Mohammadan and Christian rule. The Hindus, not only held their own, and even now are influencing their erstwhile conquerors and rulers. Had it not been for the caste, and the preservation of the ancient traditions and culture by respective castes, this would never have been possible.

The Brahmanas kept the Vedas and the Sastras hidden. The Kammalans kept art and architecture alive. The Vaidyas and the Kaniyans kept the medicine and medical science flourishing. Even the weavers kept their trade secrets, and quality in production, until their secrets were extracted from them and their hands were cut off by merciless foreigners.

Without the Vedas and the Sastras that were kept hidden by the Brahmans, India today would have known nothing about her past. This was

not an easy job for them, in an age without a printing press. For the maintenance of the sacred texts, they made education compulsory and made every student a walking encyclopaedia. If a Brahmana boy was to spend many impressionable years of his life in education of this kind, where was the opportunity for him to learn any profession so as to enable him to make a living? It was no wonder that the kings gave them free-gifts, land for their maintenance, and exempted them from usual rates and taxes. The public has never been insensible of Brahman selflessness in this respect. All from Rajanya to Chamar took upon themselves that it was the duty of maintaining the Brahmana. All gave gifts to Brahmanas. On all occasions of even least festivity the Brahmanas were fed freely, and 'dakshinas' or gifts in money, clothes and cows were given to them. Festivities for this purpose spread throughout the year. It could be a birth ceremony or death ceremony; it could be celebration of a birthday, and it could be any kind of anniversary. It could be an illness in the family, and it could be a rite to ward off any illness. It could be a rite for hastening the rain, or it could be the satisfactory completion of a fast. When a man has a desire to give, any excuse for it can be found. Even in this twentieth century, if the Brahmanas would revert back to their traditional occupation, Hindu India from king to peasant, from Kammalan to Chamar would not hesitate to maintain them.

Likewise it was thought by all that it was their duty to maintain the craftsmen. In towns and

cities they had no dearth of occupation. But in villages they had their lean days. On these occasions the whole community came to their rescue. It was not charity they dispensed on these occasions ; it was due performance of their obligation towards the professions of national and social importance. Craftsmen, like the Brahmanas were possessors of many things, scientific knowledge, trade secrets and technical skill on which alone depended the prosperity and well-being of the entire nation. If these craftsmen were not divided into castes, it would have been impossible for them to see to their own welfare, and maintain the canons of trade and profession.

Caste kept up the efficiency of craft and trade. It was more convenient for the sons to learn the secrets of a trade from their father or from an older member of the caste, without paying a premium for their training. No craftsman paid a fee for his tuition, though for general education he had to pay as it was taught often by members of other castes. There was no caste without a teacher of some kind. Even the Syrian Christians in Travancore took a leading part in teaching. The Brahmanas, non-Brahmanas, touchables and untouchables, all flocked together to get from them the benefit of education.

Men of caste took pride in their trade. They worshipped the symbols and tools of their trade. Perfection in work was always their aim ; remuneration played often a secondary part. They would do nothing against their traditions. Design to them was a religious rite ; planning to them was a matter of devotion ; and culmination of work

was a sacrament. At every stage of the work, they commune with the 'Ishtadevatas' or deities of their special devotion. Work commenced often with a prayer, and every hurdle or important stage in the execution was marked by thanks-giving, and the completion of an important undertaking was made to end in a sacrifice and public jubilation.

The craftsmen were given the necessary materials. The choice and selection of the material was done by them. No material that was not sound and no article that was not up to the standard was ever used by them. The owner of a house, temple or structure, for instance, had no say in the matter, except to give the site for the building and give details of the accommodation and other features required. The planning, design and execution of the work was the duty of the master craftsman. He was responsible of finding and engaging the required number of craftsmen of various categories to distribute the work among them and to see that it was efficiently carried out. The craftsmen were provided with three meals a day, and also temporary accommodation for the night. They were paid on daily basis at the rates fixed by the master craftsman taking the local rates and other circumstances into consideration. All edifices, big and small, and all works of art, for private and public purposes were done under caste organisations and management.

"The skilful and noted craftsmen" says Coomaraswamy, "was a person to be approached with gifts, and treated with respect on account of his skill and learning". Appreciation of their work

was shown by lavish gifts, including even presentation of properties. The Brahmanas used to get handsome gifts at the satisfactory conclusion of the sacrifices ; similarly the craftsmen used to get them at the satisfactory conclusion of their work. Neither groups had any reason to be jealous of the other. Both served the public and received admiration and approbation for their work, each according to its efficiency and ability.

The craftsmen did not consider wages as hire for their work, they considered them as recognition of their skill. They felt that they were benefactors of society. They cherished their status as members of the craft. Under such circumstances nothing could have persuaded one to change his caste. If they agitate now against it, it is because they have fallen from the high position held by their ancestors, or some one has been taking advantage of them.

The craftsman did not look to his work as a means of his livelihood ; it was a way for his salvation. According to Mayamata, the builder who does his work properly will be reborn as a noble. On the other hand, "one who knows amiss his craft, taking hire wrongfully, which wife and children eat and enjoy, bringing misfortune to the owner of the house, that builder will fall into hell and suffer". "Builders and painters taking money falsely from other men thereby grow poor". "Dying they fall into hell and suffer pain for years, if they escape, they will posses a deformed body, and live in great distress ; when born as a man it will be as a needy builder ; the painter's eye will be

squinted look ye what livelihood can their be for him". Similar threats with dire consequences were held out to all craftsmen. Some of their descendants still believe in these threats. Under such belief it was but natural for them to turn out good work.

India is spoken well of by other nations. India's reputation is mainly based on the works of her craftsmen, with a caste background. Now caste is no criterion, and craftsmen have no traditional background. What is the result? Inferior workmanship. Mohenjodaro and Kausambi have shown instances of great accuracy in craftsmanship, which alas is not to be seen in present day constructions, despite the facilities that are afforded by precision instruments imported from the West. There are few master-builders or master craftsmen today; and hardly any to teach the new entrants and to impart the secrets of the trade. In western countries there are Trade Unions fixing the minimum qualifications for the tradesmen. In India the trade unions are interested only in securing more wages to their constituents. The government as well as the industrialist do not appear to be strong enough to enforce trade qualifications. As long as caste maintained the standard, it was a national asset.

CHAPTER 16

CASTE AND RELIGION

Caste and religion are so intermingled that people often take caste for religion. The religion of all those who observed the caste in Hinduism is often mistaken for Brahmanism. It is but natural when the Brahmanas and the Brahmanised Hindus cry themselves hoarse to the effect that their form of religion is the correct and true Hinduism. Is there any substance in it? It cannot be determined unless it is known what Hinduism is, and what the highest common factor in the religion of the Hindus.

What is Hinduism? No definite reply is ever received to this question. Invariably one is referred to the Vedas, especially to the Rig Veda, where very little of Hinduism is found; or to the Upanishads, most of which are contradictory, or to the Sutras, which cannot be understood without explanations, or to the Puranas, which are written for the credulous and not for the intellegentsia. Out of desperation one might go to a religious teacher, however unreligious he may look. If he happens to be a conventional Brahmana, you may be asked to wait until you are reborn again as a Brahmana. If one goes to a Vedantist, he will be referred to the nerve-racking philosophy of Sankara, or to Ramanuja's differences with him. If he goes to a Brahma Samajist, he will be told that Hinduism is a form of Christianity, which should be observed

in Brahman fashion. But many an inquirer will have no opportunity to meet the high lights in any of these lines, he may have to be satisfied himself with any holy man, who goes about half-naked, if not fully, and looking hideous with ash-besmeared body or mud-plastered hair, and often reeking with the smoke of Ganja or opium, with begger bowl in the hand, and curse and imprecations in his mouth. Even if one is prepared to become a disciple to such holy men, precious little can be learned, except perhaps a few mantras, mental and bodily exercises.

Hindu places of pilgrimage and worship are many. Would a trip to any of these places or even all the places help? Very little, except that one can have a dip often in many a pool of dirty water, and collect more dirt on one's feet from the sacred precincts. Very little of religion or devotion is found in any of these places, except frenzy, bigotry, superstition and lip service to religion.

Is this religion? Is this Hinduism? If Hinduism can be called a religion, it is a religion of 'live and let live'. It has no mission to be accomplished, it has no prophets or saviours to be placed, it has no dogmas to be preached and no commission to hasten the path of the unbelievers to hell.

The complacency of Hinduism suffered a great deal when it was attacked by the Muslims and Christians in turn. It happened at a time when the Hindus neglected their war-god Subramanya

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and when they failed to think of Ganesa before starting on an expedition, and while they were splitting hairs over the duality of God and the impermanence of everything on earth, and trying to outdo both the Buddhists and Jains in asceticism and vegetarianism. Virile races like Arabs and Turks found the Hindus disunited and easy to be conquered. The Mohommadans came with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other. The Europeans came with money bag in one hand, and the Bible hoisted on a bayonet in the other. The result was that the Hindus forgot their past, their religion and culture; and more than one-third of them bacame converts to the new religions, while the rest began to serve the new masters for the sake of money. Fervency and zeal for serving the new masters were shown more by the privileged classes, while the backward castes remained hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Hinduism in the past was not a begoted religion. Even the great Sivaji, in the height of his glory, never attempted at conversion. The Hindus never interfered with the religion of others. When the Jews came to India they were allowed to have their church. When the Christians came, they were given every facility to build their churches and worship in their own way. When centuries later the Parsis came, they were given land to cultivate and freedom to worship their gods in their own fashion. These communities and their prosperity are standing monuments of Hindu toleration. No nation can boast of such a record. Every one in India was free to worship as he liked,

and eat and drink what he liked. Some rulers, like Asoka and Harsha, tried to interfere in these respects, but their failure was most colossal; even the Brahmanas rose against them.

There was occasion for a Hindu to declare his faith, or swear allegiance to any particular god, true or false. It was not necessary for him to follow in the footsteps of any particular sage or man. Neither was it necessary for him to be present at any congregational worship, nor was he obliged to go to a temple, even for a marriage. He had very little to do with the priests. He could have followed any line of thought, materialism, agnosticism or Vedantism. He could have worshipped before a tree or stone, or before a symbol or image, and nobody would have ridiculed him for doing so. He had to give nobody an account of his religious views. His contact with the priest was in the nature of an employer to the employee; provided he kept his caste rules of which he himself was the enforcer, none raised a finger against him.

Tolerance was the key-note of the Hindu religion. The Brahmanas never force their religious views on the non- Brahmanas. In fact their caste-complex made them unintentionally the most tolerant among the 'priestly' classes. Among the Hindu there were those who followed the highest form of religion that was ever evolved, and those who adhered to the lowest form animism. Hence the worship of Sasta, Kali, Parama-Siva and Vishnu exist side by side with the Vedanta. Whoever came to India, except the Christians and

Muslims, came under the spell of Hinduism, for it provided a god according to one's own liking. The Parthians, Kushans, Sakas, or whosoever came to India, became Hindus, adopted some form of Hinduism, and thereby became rulers, administrators, merchants or cultivators, without any opposition from the rest of the Hindus..

If one is to judge from the variety of religions that exist in the country, it could easily be said that no other people have devoted more time to religion than the Hindus. In the hoary past they started with sorcery, then took up anti-sorcery and nature-worship. The rituals and prayers then gave way to abstract thinking, which resulted in the conception of an impersonal god on one hand, and rank materialism on the other. Impersonal gods led the way to philosophical speculation. Atheism led the way for material development and furtherance of aesthetic sense in art and craft: Concentration of the mind paved the way for yogic cult and yogic feats. Difficulty in the conception of abstract qualities took them to symbolism. Signs or idols were set up to draw the attention of the multitude to the ideas behind the symbols, this is what the foreigners call the idol-worship in India. Idol-worship is a spectacular form of religion, but the religion proper is hidden from the public gaze. Religion for the Hindu is a personal matter between him and his god, which he practises by preference in seclusion.

India was in contact with the rest of the world commercially, culturally and spiritually for untold centuries. Her religion was no object of derision

until the coming of the Muslims and the Christians who were inheritors of the idol-worship of the Chaldeans, Syrians, Grecians and Romans. What they saw in India they took for the idol-worship of their ancestry, and dubbed Hinduism as idolatrous pantheism. Max Mullar very graciously called the religion of the Vedas Henotheism. Ever since, the Hindus who came under the influence of the Christian teaching have been protesting that even 'Henotheism' does no credit to their religion, which they claim as unqualified monotheism. What a protest and what a labour of appeasement ? Any one who knows about Hindu religion cannot but feel that it is all to get themselves ingratiated in the good books of their Christian monitors. In International matters nobody cares about religion. It is might and money that count, if not ability to adjust to the surroundings.

The Hindus have had several gods, with or without images for them. No image has any importance until it is set up and dedicated, like churches and mosques. The setting up of an image is called 'prathistha', or the installation of a 'prathi' or substitute. Unlike the image of the idolators this 'Prathi' or idol has never been a god for the Hindus. The nature and characteristics of the 'Prathis' had been well defined by the wisemen of old. God has many or all qualities. To some he is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient; to others he is all seeing, yet formless. The 'Prathis' the substitute, or the idols represent whatever form in which the Hindus worship Him, and they are for the purpose of visualising the divine in that

aspect. All the same, it is not God, but only a symbol to visualise certain qualities of the divine. A formless image will help one in meditation; but meditation of an image with many hands and fighting weapons in each, will lead one to success in warfare. Hence for the former purpose they made Siva-Lingam, and for the latter Subramanya; in like manner for all other aspects of God. A goddess who is asked for assistance in securing wealth, should be different from one who is sought for securing knowledge. Even the monotheists ask for various things from their god, and as such would it not be better to visualise Him as giver capable of giving the gift that one desires ? Salvation is a state, or a state of being, for which a suitable state of mind has to be cultivated. But all our prayers are not for salvation. There is not much sense in asking a peace-loving God to lead one in battle. Realising all these, the Hindus conceived God in many aspects and worshipped him in those aspects, each according to his requirements.

No Hindu believes that an image as it is, is a god or goddess. It is nothing but matter until powers are invested in it by 'Mantras' and 'Tantras', or prayers and rituals. Nobody ever knows really whether a material object receives such powers or not. But few among mankind behave in a manner to ensure that is does not recive powers. A temple may be built for one god, or several gods may be located in the same temple. A temple may even be without an image. The aborigines have no temples, nor images, they worship in a grove

or in an open space set apart for the purpose. The Mohenjodaro people do not appear to have had any temples. The Nair houses on the Malabar Coast, though they often have a room set apart for worship, they seldom have any image in it, but there may be a 'pitha' or stool to represent the seat of the goddess. This appears to have been the type of shrines, before the days of the professional priests.

No Hindu has the concept that he will worship only one god; no god appears to care if he worships more than one god at a time. The Hindus have had more than one god always; monotheism does not appear to have been their weakness. Each family, or locality had a special god or goddess whom they addressed as 'Ishtadevata', deity of one's own choice. Their chief concern was the appeasement of the Ishtadevata, and even now it continues to be so. They believe that God could be worshipped in any form. Even in the same form, the way of worship depends on one's own spiritual development or make-up. The father and son may not have the same idea about God, but both worship the same God, though their mental approach may be different. Hence they never insisted on set prayers or standard form of worship. Truly speaking Hindusim is the most democratic of all religions. Neither the State, nor the priest ever interfered. In developing such a religion all castes were responsible, and all racial elements made their contribution. The aborigines paved the way for the temples, by setting up Sarnas or groves for worship. The untouchable Kammalan, as the builder,

constructed the temples, and he as sculptor, brazier, or goldsmith, made the images. The Brahmana's share was to dedicate or breathe life into the image by rituals and incantations. Thus the outward form of the Hindu religion is the creation of many castes. Even for the tenets of Hinduism no particular caste holds a special brief. Among the propounders of the religious doctrine, members of all castes, Brahmana, Rajanya, Vaisya, Sudra, Paraya, Chammar, touchables, untouchables and unapproachables, will be found. There were Sudras and their descendants among the Vedic Rishis; some teachers of the Upanishads were non-Brahmanas and Sudras. Some Vaishnavite and Saivite Saints were Sudras and Parayas. Valmiki, the author of Ramayana was a Chandala. Nandan was a Paraya, Pakanar was a Pulaya. All castes have contributed to what is known as Hinduism today.

Dr. Radharkrishnan rightly says that Hinduism "is more a way of life than a form of thought". It is not denying that it is a religion, nor that it has theology. It has a high theology, and a higher conception of God. But these do not play an exclusive part in the daily life of the people. If it were otherwise, how could a Chammar with no 'sandhya', or fixed form of worship at the fixed hours of the day be a Hindu? A Chammar is as much a Hindu as a Brahmana. A butcher who slaughters animals every day of his life is a Hindu like the sage who preaches 'Ahimsa'. It is so in every religion, profession makes no difference; a butcher may be as much a Christian as a prelate.

to the presence of the deity; even the Mohammadan who is the hereditary fire-works man of the temple, is addressed as 'swami' or god, a title which is reserved usually for the Tamil Brahmanas. All the Hindu gods have become Brahmanised, if one is to judge by the sacred-thread shown on their images, but Sasta was till recently without the sacred-thread. In the temples of other gods too the Brahman privileges and prerogatives are gradually waning; all except the actual 'puja' itself is being done by non-Brahmanas, reserved places for the Brahmanas are no longer there. It is only a question of time before capable non-Brahmanas start doing the 'pujas'.

Even in Northern India, where they cry of Hindu Dharma in danger is the loudest, the non-Brahmanas are usurping the Brahmana privileges in installing images of gods, and reading the sacred texts to others, though all in the name of Brahmanism.

CHAPTER 17

CASTE AND ANCESTOR WORSHIP

Ancestor worship is the oldest form of religion. It began with man's concern for his ancestors. Man in his most primitive days may not have been much different from the best of the animals. Conception of a higher being may have been foreign to both. But both man and animal recognised the master, feared his strength and superior ability. Obedience to him and desire to please him was a natural consequence. In the absence of the master, the animal lost all its fear for him, but the man's brain being more retentive, though he realised that his father was dead, a hundred and one things connected with him remained longer in his brain. It may have been the seat which he generally occupied, it may have been his burst of anger or his appreciative smile, or it may have been his commands or injunctions. It was impossible for the son to realise that such a strong and powerful person disappeared altogether. Why his body was still in the grave, and the sons or those who were left behind must have paid several visits to the father's grave, to pay respect to him, to seek his advice on matters of importance, and even guidance in the daily affairs of life. It was this sentimental reaction that paved the way for ancestor worship. Man may hold different views about the nature of a future exist-

ence, but almost all agree about a future existence, and all religions are based on this supposition.

The dead body was the first concern of those who were left behind. What were they to do with it? In the dry climate of Egypt, they disembowelled and embalmed it, with a view to preserve it for ever. But in a climate like that of India, putrification was to set in within a few hours. Quick disposal, therefore, was most essential. They buried the corpse in the garden near the house, to be near the relatives in their pleasures, troubles and tribulations. At every meal when they collected together, they remembered him, as his seat at the eating place was vacant. Though he could not be seen, they could not give up the idea that he was somewhere there, so they offered food and drinks to him, as the aborigines are still doing. The Brahmanas have reduced the offering to once a day, while the Hindus in general have further reduced it to once a month or even once a year. But no Hindu, touchable or untouchable, approachable or unapproachable lets a year pass without performing 'bali' or giving offerings to the spirits of the departed ancestors at least once.

Some thought it was highly improper to bury the dead body of the respectable ancestors anywhere or everywhere or at places where they would not be recognised. So they selected special sites, made underground cellars to deposit the dead bodies, often like the Egyptian, with the favourite things the ancestors liked most. Such cellars have been found on the eastern slopes of the Western ghats, with the skeletons and favour-

ite implements of the departed. For the dead bodies of children, they appear to have adopted a less expensive way of disposing of the remains, or a compact system, by which the whole body was put in a big pot, with a lid and buried underground. Such pots have been found at Mohenjo-daro of the third millennium B. C.

The burial of the dead does not appear to have solved the problem of the spirit. The spirits appear to have shown their existence in various ways, by threatening relations in dreams, by causing illness which the witch doctor could not account for, except as the malignant influence of the departed. Soon appeasement was commenced, regular oblations for and regularised worship of the departed became the usual practice. This way of appeasing the ancestors is still being practised by all classes and castes in India.

Someone then thought that a complete destruction of the dead body was the best way of sending away or liberating the spirits from their dead remains, and to deal with their malignant influences. Hence they began to cremate. The psychic mediums give testimonies to the miseries of the spirits, while their dead bodies rot in the graves. The theosophists affirm that there are two components for every dead, the Etheric Double which stays with the dead body until it is fully decomposed, and the Atma or the spirit real which goes away to other regions. This appears to have been the common belief among the aborigines as well. Rev. P. Dehorn, a European missionary, who worked for many years among the aborigines, speak

of a belief among the Oraons of having two 'shades' for every individual. One called 'Othaek' and the other called 'Nabbek'; Othaek belonging to 'Otha' or the earth, and 'Nabbaek', that goes to 'Marka'. Marka may have been an older form of the Sanskrit 'Svarga', the heaven of the Hindus. The 'Othaek' was bound to the earth, and it had all the qualities of the owner, such as love, hatred, likes and dislikes. The primitive mind was greatly exercised in keeping those with hatred under control. First they thought by burying the dead deep under the gound and placing a heavy stone on the top will solve the problem. It will be seen that the ancient burial grounds of the Mundas are conspicuous with such heavy stones. Such burial grounds are found round about Fatehpur Sikri in the north and Ranchi hills in the south, and in several other habitats of the Mundas. There the chieftains' graves are conspicuous by huge upright stones.

The Munda practice, like that of the Nairs, was originally to bury the dead bodies in one's own compound. But the Mundas later on decided to have a common burial ground like the Christians, at some distance from one's own home. Perhaps they thought that in company of their own kind the spirits would be less harmful, and more cheerful.

The Oraons, probably on economic grounds, bury the dead individually undergound for sometime and then exhume the remains and burn collectively the decomposed matter and the bones, once or twice in the year, generally when they are

free from cultivation or harvest.

The Hindus burn the dead bodies with combustible wood, which varies from country to country. Those who can afford use sandal-wood and ghi. But in sacred places like Banaras and Prayag they generally half burn the dead bodies, and throw the rest into the river, evidently also on economic grounds.

In throwing the unburnt portions and the ashes into the river, the aborigines appear to have been the poineers. They collect the entire ashes and whatever bits of bones are left unburnt, and throw them all into the mountain streams, so that all what is left of the ancestors be scattered and washed to distant places, away from their habitations, so as to free the relations from all undesirable influences. Throwing the ashes into the river is evidently a Kolaryan or Mundari custom; for it was not the practice among the Dravidians. Their custom was to collect the bones in an urn and keep it under a tree or special shrine constructed for the purpose, in their own premises. In front of such shrines they light lamps every evening to keep the memory of the dead ever fresh in their mind. They are never forgotten, on national days and festivals they are especially remembered and oblations including meat and liquor are given to them.

Hence it will be seen that the ash-immersion to which the Hindus give great prominence now was not originally intended for honouring the departed, but for getting rid of them and to destroy everything connected with them, so that one could be free from their baneful influences. It was fear

that was at the bottom of it and not honour or respect.

The Hindu as well as the aboriginal way of the disposal of the dead runs on similar lines. Both for cremation and burial they make the grave in the north-south direction, and place the dead body with the head at the south and facing the north. The north appears to have always been the place of their ambition. Some say it is because all the sacred places in India are in the north. But there are as many sacred places in the south as there are in the north, and those from the north go to the south on pilgrimage.

The period of 'pollution' after death is observed by both the Hindus as well as the aborigines. The Brahmanas observe it for ten days in the manner of the Mundas, while the non-Brahmanas in the South observe it for fifteen days in the manner of the Oraons. Among the Brahmanas as was stated earlier, the period of pollution is regulated by the degree of relationship, the most distant ones observe it only for a day, while the others observe it for three, five days, etc., according to the degree of relationship.

The observance of pollution as stated before might have been on hygienic grounds. In course of time the period of pollution gathered tremendous importance, as fast, prayer, and rituals performed during the period became a means of creating a spirit body for the departed to enable them to rise high in the regions of light and splendour. The presumption is that all spirits are naturally earth-bound. After leaving the physical body they roam

about in their usual haunts with the same interest, likes and dislikes. To send them away from the usual haunts is the chief concern of the relatives. The coarse body of the spirit is not considered suitable to transport themselves to higher regions. By means of the ceremonies, performed each day a suitable body for the spirit will be gradually built, first the trunk, then the limbs set by set, and after fifteen or ten days when the body building is completed, the spirit through the vehicle of the newly built body is conducted to Chandra-loka, or the region of the moon, where it takes up its abode. These rituals are considered to be most essential on behalf of every dead person. If it is not done, the spirits are presumed to be unhappy, and their unhappy state will tell upon the relatives.

For this body building, the spirits have to depend on the relatives, who are left behind. The Brahmanas think that it can be effectively done only by a son. Hence is their extreme desire to have a son. But the Matriarchy think that it should be done by a sister's son or even a daughter or whosoever inherits the dead person's property. However, all agree that something has to be done by somebody or other.

Some people like the Nairs of Malabar often extend the period of 'pitru-kriya' for forty-one days, or even a full year. During these extended periods, the spirit is invited daily from Chandra-loka to one's house, given oblations and conducted back until the last day when it is finally led to Pitru-loka, or the region of the Fathers, where it lives for ever.

The Brahmanas and the Mundas who perform the ceremony only for ten days are guided by biological precedence; as a child takes about ten siderial months in the mother's womb for the perfection of its body. But those who consider that fifteen days are necessary for the body-building of the spirits are guided by the lunar developments; for the moon takes fifteen days to grow from new-moon to full-moon.

It will be seen from the Vedic hymns that spirit-worship was greatly in vogue among the Vedic Rishis. To whichever when they sacrificed to gods they invariably invoked the 'Fathers' too to come and sit on the spread grass and partake of the sacrifice. Shaving the head and pairing the *nails before performing the rites for the departed* have been common among the aborigines as it is even today among all castes of the Hindus.

The Hindus may belong to different sects and castes but in ancestor worship they are all one. Ancestor worship is the main religion of the Hindus of all castes as well as of the aborigines. It originated among the aborigines, developed through ages and was perfected by the Brahmanas.

Even the image worship of the Hindus may be traced back to certain aboriginal practices. Among certain sections of the aborigines, it is the custom to erect a stone on the river bank, where the dead bodies are cremated and the ashes are thrown into the streams. These stones are frequented by the relatives for the purpose of giving oblations to the spirits. Sometimes they decorate them with rice flour, in different designs. More gods are wor-

shipped by the Hindus with their representation in crude stones with marks of Ochre, Kumkuma and sandal-wood paste. From the decoration with flour to carving is not a far cry. It may be the sorcerers who first conceived the idea of carving. For, they even now represent the enemy by lines, and before they drive nails into its heart to hurt and harm him.

God-worship has originated from spirit worship. Similarly God delineation on stone or wood has evolved from crude spirit delineation on a similar material. All castes from the highest Brahmana to the lowest Chammar are worshippers of the images. Some may worship the images of the ancestors, some may worship the images of Vishnu, Siva or Kali; some may worship the images of their teachers and preceptors. Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa is worshipped through his image set up in a beautiful temple at Belur, and Mahatma Gandhi is worshipped at his 'Samadhi' in Delhi. Since the coming of photography, the ancestors and national heroes are worshipped through their photographic representations.

In ancestor-worship the Hindus have a common religion, in fact, the only common religion they have. But it is the ancestor-worship which maintains the caste, and stands in the way of abolishing the caste, and effecting social reforms. The spirits of the ancestors stand in the way of intermarriage within the caste and outside the caste, the fear of them also stands against interdining, not only among the Hindus themselves, but also with Muslims, Christians, Europeans, and all foreigners. It

is usual to say that the chief objection to interdine with the lower castes is their dirty or unclean habits, but the truth of it will be seen when the Hindus refuse to eat with the Europeans and Americans, who are far superior to the Hindus in cleanliness and sanitary habits.

"An essential difference between the civilisation and primitive society as we know them", says Toynbee, "is the direction taken by mimesis." Mimesis is a generic feature of all social life. Its operation can be observed both in primitive societies and in civilisation, in every social activity. It operates, however, in different directions in the two species of the society. In primitive societies, mimesis is directed towards the older generation and towards the dead ancestors who stand, unseen but not unfelt, at the back of the leader, reinforcing their prestige". It will be seen that in India, it is these dead ancestors who stand in the way of social reform and caste abolition. Care for the ancestors and desire to please them is the daily concern of every Brahmana or Brahmanised Hindu who leads India, religiously, socially and politically. Ancestor worship is different from having regard for the ancestors. Respect for ancestors may lead one from victory to victory; but blind worship of the ancestors as it will prevent one from deviating from the paths laid out by them, and will hold the progress of the society in check. The society or the nation that looks always to the past has no future, it will be ruled by custom, however unsuitable it may be for the present needs.

CHAPTER 18

CASTE AND SOCIO-RELIGIOUS RITES

In the observance of socio-religious rites, the Hindus from the highest to the lowest caste, all exhibit the same enthusiasm. In fact, in the observance of socio-religious rites, racial unity in India may better be studied.

If there is a bathing festival, all take part in it; no caste or sectarian differences are found there; every one goes and bathes in the same water, drinks it for the sake of purification, and does homage to the sacred river, tank or pool. A Brahmana may repeat some Vedic hymns, while an untouchable sweeper will invoke the same deity in his uncultured tongue, but with equal fervency and zeal. Practically on the same dates, the aborigines also perform similar ceremonial baths, though they may not go to such holified places as Prayag, Hardwar or Nasik. They bathe in their mountain streams or tanks, and pray to their respective gods. Bathing and praying on these occasions are the fundamental factors, the sanctity for a particular place may be of later origin. Before the days of railways, the pilgrims who bathed in places like Prayag were very few. Dr. Altekar, lately of Patna University, says that the bathing festivals at Prayag, to which the Hindus give extreme importance now, could not have begun earlier than the seventeenth century A. D. But even the Oraons and Mundas,

who may not have heard of the Prayag Melas, take their ceremonial immersion in their village tanks on the same date. Advancement in culture may bring about a fresh approach to national and religious festivals, but the fundamentals seldom change.

What is true of bathing festivals is also true of all other festivals. Take the important ceremonies of the Brahmanas ; parallels to them will be found in every caste and race in India, and their origin in many cases may be traced among the aboriginal tribes. Some may see in this a gradual infiltration of the Hindu or Brahmana custom ; but the aborigines could not be accused of imitating the Brahmanas or the Hindus from whom they voluntarily retreated to mountain fastnesses.

Holi is a festival which is more observed in Aryavarta or places where the Aryans were. Though it is observed by high and low alike, it is characterised as a festival of the vulgar or the lower castes. The culmination of Holi is the burning of Holika. Holika is said to have been a pious monster, who was burnt to death by her wicked brother Hiranyakasipu, for encouraging his son Prahalada in the worship of Vishnu. If it is so, should the Hindus not worship her instead of burning her effigy year after year with abusive tongues and uncontrolled hilarity ? Of course there are several stories and explanations about the Holi festival and its observance. Every year the Holi edition of the daily papers come out with new stories, and new apologies. Yet its origin is shrouded in mystery. If one would forget the Arayan superiority complex,

it may be possible to trace its origin to the early days of the Hindus. Exactly at the same period as Holi, the aborigines like the Oraons celebrate the 'Phagu' festival. To them it is the festival of the dying year. It comes at the beginning of Phagu or Phalguna of the Hindus, the day after the full moon. 'Phagu' resembles Holi in many respects. The day before the festival, the Oraon youths collect branches of a particular tree, and straw. These branches are planted in a central place in their village, and straw is swathed round them. The next evening it is set fire to with shouts of joy. It is a way of bidding farewell to the old year, and ushering in the New Year. There will be great rejoicing after the bonfire, singing, dancing, drinking and merry-making that will continue till the morning. To consider the departing year as a demon or demoness is not anything unusual ; at the New Year's service the English parson refers to it, as the dreary, dark and unhospitable year, and ushers in the New Year as bright and hopeful.

"All over Europe", says Sir James George Frazer, "the peasants have been accustomed from time immemorial to kindle bonfires on certain days of the year, and dance round, or leap over them. Customs of this kind can be traced back on historical evidence to the Middle Ages, and their analogy to similar customs observed in antiquity goes with strong internal evidence to prove that their origin must be sought in a period prior to the spread of Christianity. Indeed the earliest proof of their observance in Northern Europe is

furnished by the attempts made by the Christian Synods in the eighth century to put them down as heathenish rites". How long before the Christian era the Indians were practising this heathenish rite of the Holi fire, is difficult to ascertain; but its observance among the aborigines, and the high class Brahmanas may indicate that it was a common custom in India even before the Vedic Brahmanas got themselves separated from the aborigines.

Among the primitive people of Europe the favourite occasions for the fire festivals were spring and mid summer. In India it has always been spring, or the departure of Vishnu from the earth, and the coming of Brahma. According to the belief in Gujrat and elsewhere the three Murtis, Vishnu, Brahma, and Siva, have special sway over the world for four months in turn. This no doubt was the religious way of indicating the three seasons of the year. All the world over there were only three seasons in olden days. The four seasons in Europe and six seasons in North India are of later conception. The oldest practice in India was to commence the New Year with the commencement of the seasons. Two such New Years are still in evidence, one with Holi and the other with Devali. In places like Swabia, in Europe, they used to burn a witch at the spring fire festival. But in India it is the pious Holika who is still being burnt. The aborigines dance round the Holi-fire like the Europeans of the Middle Ages, abusing each other and foretelling of coming events from the direction of the flame and the sanctity attached to the ashes, all appear to be the same in

India as they were in pagan Europe. For high class Brahmanas in India, Holi has become an occasion for religious service, but to the low classes as well as for the aborigines, it is still an occasion for merry-making.

Devali marks the end of a year by another reckoning, and the beginning of a New Year which is ushered in by illumination. This is celebrated by all classes and castes throughout India. On this occasion Vishnu is supposed to take over the sway of the world. The corresponding festival of the Oraons is called 'Sohorai'. Sohara in Santhali means pleasing, pleasant or cheerful. Perhaps the festival is called Sohorai, for the pleasant cold weather that commences from this date. The aborigines make a special kind of 'Kacha dipa' or small earthern cups for the occasion, like the 'chirags' of the Hindus. Cotton wicks fed with oil are burnt in these cups. They keep the lamp burning throughout the night in their rooms, cattle-sheds, kitchen gardens, manure pits, rice-fields and tree-tops near their homes. They give a great deal of attention to their cattle and cattle-sheds. The sheds are thoroughly cleaned, illuminated and kept fumigated all throughout the night; and on the next morning the cattle are bathed, decorated and fed on special diet and delicacies. The amusements for the day include a fight between a pig and a buffalo, in which the pig will be done to death. Dancing, singing and drinking follow as is usual with these people. The special attention given to cattle may be taken as a kind of stock-taking at the end of the year; and it is after this festival that they appoint or reappoint for the

year the Ahirs, herdsmen, to look after the cattle. Parallel practice among the Hindus is the balancing of the yearly accounts and starting yearly transactions afresh for the New Year.

Makara Sankranti is another festival, which the Hindus of all castes and aborigines equally celebrate. In places like Allahabad, thousands of people go and dip themselves in the uninvitingly cold and invariably dirty water. The aborigines too, from the plains of Bengal to the top of the Vindhyas, can be seen bathing on this occasion in their mountain streams and water tanks and taking out processions, and having recourse to all kinds of merry-making. Every shrine of any importance is visited by the devotees on this day. Though worship on this occasion is an article of faith, few realise the astronomical importance of the day. It is on this day that according to the Hindu calendar, the sun retraces its course after its southern transit. Some aborigines celebrate Tusu Pareb on this occasion, but the Hindu date of celebration may not always synchronise with that of the aborigines. Whatever difference there might be, can attributed to the adjustment of the lunar calender to solar computation.

Sivaratri is another festival that establishes the national and racial unity of India. In the observance of Sivaratri, all from the highest Brahmana to the lowest Bhil, take an equal interest. The socio-religious observances based on the progress of the moon, month by month are many. Originally these may not have had any religious significance at all; but on becoming fast days they

(6) Gandharva : In which only criterion is marital relations with mutual desire, for the purpose of "amorous embrace proceeding from sensual inclination."

(7) Rakshasa : Seizure ot a woman by force, while she weeps and calls for assistance, after killing her kinsmen in battle or armed contest,

(8) Pisacha : In which the lover secretly embraces the woman while she is sleeping, or flushed with drink, or disordered in her intellect.

The first four kinds of marriages were permissible for the Brahmanas, and the last four for Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras, while (6) and (7) were specially permissible for the Kshatriyas (Man-Dhar III. 21.34, and 36-38). The Brahmanas and other high class Hindus now do not follow the Smriti injunctions, their practice at present is a reversal of Asura, in which the father gives away as much as he can mobilise or borrow, as dowry to the bridegroom. This system must have originated since women ceased to be earning members of the family.

As the social position of women among the aborigines has not much changed since the days of Manu-Smriti, they still practise practically all the forms of marriage except the first two varieties in some form or other. Arsha and Asura are the chief forms of their marriages, which the Kharias call Olaldae. The Gandharva or the elopement marriage they call Udra-Udhri cholki. Rakshasa and Pisacha may be recognised in their Dhukuku and Sindrum Laki. In the former the woman takes

the initiative; she goes to the house of the man of her choice with a pot of beer or a basket of Mahua flower, and stays with him; and according to the custom he will have to take her as his legally wedded wife. The Sundrum-laki variety is practically the same as Pisacha, but it is done in more refined way by the aborigines, as it implies only the forcible application of vermillion on the girl's forehead. The Hill Bhuiyas do this in a slightly different way when the young man's suit is not accepted by the maiden, he forcibly inserts in her hair a bunch of white or blood-red flowers. No other man can woo her after that, and on reconciliation they may get married. This system of marriage they appropriately call phulkhusi.

In usual marriage ceremonies there is a great similarity between the aborigine and Brahmana details. Though the Hindus overcrowd the ceremonies with Vedic hymns and rituals, the main items of their ceremony are practically the same as among the aborigines. The Vedi (or altar), the winnowing basket, the plough and other items, that are most essential for the Brahmana marriage, play equally important parts in the aborigine marriage. Similarly, for every ceremony connected with the birth of a child there is identical ceremony among the aborigines. Though the Brahmanas and the Brahmanised Hindus have made additions to these ceremonies, in essence all are the same. If the Brahmanas and the Brahmanised Hindus are descendants of foreign invaders, or if they are in any way ethnically different from the rest of the Indians, how could one account for such uniformity

in socio-religious rites and practices? Certainly the aborigines could not be considered as having imbibed all these from the Brahmanas, though the Hinduised aborigines are gradually adopting some of the Brahmana ways and customs even to the extent of child-marriage. But the discarded forms of Brahmana marriages and all the common customs that are yet to be found will indicate that the ancestors of the Brahmanas and the aborigines followed the same custom, which should establish more than anything else the cultural and the racial unity of all castes in India. The ancestors of the Brahmanas and the aborigines were one and the same. If the Brahmana customs have any claim to be called Aryan, the aborigines should claim Aryanhood by adopting Brahmana ways. In fact they have been doing it for a long time.

CHAPTER 19

CONCLUSION

Caste is neither based on political grounds as is advanced by the Europeans, nor is it based on divine dispensation as is believed by the orthodox Hindus. The political basis of caste is the presumed invasion of India by the Aryans, and consequent enslavement of the original inhabitants. As there is no historical or traditional or archaeological evidence to establish an Aryan invasion, the development of caste on a political basis should be discredited. Likewise the divine origin of caste cannot but be discredited as it is much more based on the mistaken interpretation of certain terms used in a single hymn in the Vedas.

Caste is a form of social assortment based on herd-instinct, or an innate desire among the primitive people to group together on high ideals of mutual assistance and social service. In totemic days, castes or Kulis specialised in food-production ; and in cultural age, castes specialised in arts, crafts and sciences. Till religion began to guide people through its single tracks there was no difference between man and man, nor between caste and caste. Religion first divided man into two groups, as believers and non-believers ; the believers in India became the 'dvijas' or the twice-born, and the non-believers remained as 'Ksudras (sorcerers) or Sudras. The non-believers were excluded from the privileged circle of the believers, which

paved the way for caste differences, and cut the very root of social solidarity. Every religion made differences between the believers and non-believers, and whenever and wherever the believers were powerful, they imposed restrictions on non-believers, harassed them and persecuted them. The Christians suffered persecution at the hands of the unbelieving Jews and also from the heathenish Romans, until it was the turn of the Christians to inflict similar punishments on those who differed from them even in narrow sectarian beliefs. But among the Hindus such persecutions seldom appear to have taken place, mainly on account of two reasons:—(1) the 'dvija' baptism did not envisage a new religion and new gods, and the gods of the 'dvijas' and 'non-dvijas' remained the same. (2) In social service 'the dvijas' were not independent of the non-dvijas. They were not two independent and self-contained units, like the Muslims, for instance. The dvijas, though they had agriculturists and traders among them, had no artisans and other social service groups among them. No Brahmanas could have a house built without the assistance of the Sudra craftsmen. Thus, the caste specialisation of a pre-dvija period placed the dvijas at a disadvantage.

The dvija communities at first in their forest retreats were self-contained. There, for social service they formed themselves into three groups—the Brahmanas, the Rajanyas, and the Vaisyas. The Vaisyas as the breeders of cattle, cultivators of land and exchangers of the produce who provided all the material requirements of a pastoral

community. The Rajanyas armed themselves with bow and arrow and kept away all the wild animals and robbers from their settlements. The anxiety they felt about the robbers is well evident from the Rig Vedic hymns. Even the so-called Aryan conqueror, Sudasa prayed to Indra mainly to keep the robbers away. Fight against the robbers and wild beasts made the Rajanyas devote more time to acquiring 'kshatra' or physical prowess. This paved the way for the Rajanyas to be known as a fighting caste. The main duties of the Brahmanas as are given in the texts were to learn, to teach and performance of sacrifices. These could not have been whole-time jobs. Anyway, there is sufficient evidence to show that the Brahmanas devoted a great deal of time in brewing and distilling Soma liquor to meet the drink requirements of the community, and performed sacrifices to meet the meat requirements.

In dvija settlements, they lived in mud huts with bamboo and thatch roofing. In early days there were no artisans among them; the Vedic hymns of this period speak only of three castes among them. But when they developed a taste for architecturally built houses, they had to invite the unbelieving Sudra craftsmen into their midst. The craftsmen, being professionals, readily responded, built houses, made furniture and manufactured utensils, as their descendants did centuries later for the Syrian Christians and Parsees on their arrival. The Sudra services to the dvijas were not under duress, as it may have happened at times under the Muslim rule. The association

of the Sudra craftsmen with the dvijas was on equal terms, and the work was done according to the canons of the Sudra craftsmen. There were to be sacrifices, rituals and pujas, at different stages in the course of construction. These were performed on the lines laid down by their ancestors, and not according to the dictation or requirements of the Brahmanas, nor by them, a practice which is still being followed and which would clearly indicate the terms under which the craftsmen carried out the work for the Dvijas, and also the Sudra independence in their religious affairs. The artisans in those days were not in any way inferior to the Brahmanas, both lived by their professions, and worshipped their gods in their respective ways. Even today, though the artisans may be considered untouchables, they receive great respect from the Brahmanas and Brahmanised Hindus. In some parts of India, they are addressed as Acaris (Acaryas) or preceptors. But things became different when the Brahmanas gave up their original stand, and became possessors of wealth and power. Then those Sudras, who served the Brahmanas, were treated as the scum of the society as is seen from the post-Vedic literature. Even then the Brahmanas had no hold on the Sudras, until the Sudras themselves became Brahmanised.

The Brahmanisation of the non-Brahmanas was an easy affair. It was not so difficult as the conversion of the Hindus into Christianity. Unlike the Christians and Hindus, the Brahmanas and the non-Brahmanas worshipped the same gods

practically in the same way. As the Brahmanas were traditionally priests, they at times told the non-Brahmanas how the gods were to be worshipped. In religious matters, it is the common failing of humanity to follow the priests. But among the non-Hindus, like the Christians, the priests are invariably better informed than the ordinary men; and they become priests by study; superior knowledge and proved efficiency. Whereas, the Brahmanas are priests by birth; even uneducated and uninformed Brahmanas could be found functioning as High Priests. It was the learned among them who laid the foundation of the Brahmana supremacy.

It began about a thousand years before Christ. Then the Brahmanas were not a caste, they were priests by profession, as is even so among the Christians and Muslims. Though the sons showed inclination to follow their fathers in profession, they did not hesitate to take up any profession as it is so even today. The social superiority of the Brahmanas should be considered as beginning from the days of Pushyamitra, the Brahmana commander-in-chief who usurped the throne of Magadha. Under him and other successive Brahmana kings, by wise rule and timely reforms in religions, the Brahmanas earned respect and gratitude of the people. But the priestly arrogance grew with their political power, until it was put down by the non-Brahmana, Nanda and Gupta emperors; but it was only for a short duration of two centuries.

Soon after, the Brahmanas came to power again, though not as religious mendicants or

military commanders. They took full advantage of the literary upheaval that took place during the prosperous reign and patronage of the Gupta emperors. They took the classical Sanskrit of the Gupta period as a medium of propaganda. They went through the ancient literature, suppressed those books that were inimical to their pretensions; and rewrote those that were favourable to them with additions and alterations into classical Sanskrit, which soon became the lingua franca of the elite throughout India. Among the suppressed books were the Vedas, that held no claim to Brahmana superiority. Among those texts that were altered and added on, the Puranas were the most prominent. The Puranic heroes and heroines were the favourites of the people. These heroes are represented in the Puranas as doing homage to Brahmanas and even washing their feet. In their talk, the Brahmanas were extolled, and in their actions, submission to the Brahmanas was enjoined as an essential quality. Even the gods were made to obey the Brahmanas. Subtle propaganda like this had its desired effect. Men went out of their way to placate the Brahmanas; they made every effort to please them, and to make them satisfied and happy. The presence of a hungry Brahmana was made out a calamity, and an angry one as a disaster. Their gods even were made to show respect to the Brahmanas, and their preceptors were made to say that every Brahmana should deserve worship as a god.

The master-stroke in Brahmana diplomacy was the creation of new orders of Kshatriyas, by dvija

baptism, from the barbarians who came to India and from the indigenous Sudras who looked for social superiority. The Brahmanas as priests became the guides and councillors of this new order. The social prestige of the order was backed by the Brahmanas, and they, in return, submitted themselves to the dictates of the Brahmanas. Manu-Smriti was revised and new clauses were inserted to give a legal status to the new relationship between the priest and the king. Since then the Brahmanas became the *de facto* rulers of India. The kings no longer covenanted with the people to safeguard their interests, but they were sworn to safeguard the interests of the Brahmanas, to see that all of them should be provided for; all fines collected from the people should be given to the Brahmanas, and no unbelieving Sudra should occupy any position of power or trust. The disobedient kings were deposed, obedient ones were placed in their position, or the Brahmanas themselves became the rulers. The Brahman-cum-Kshatriya rule impoverished the peasantry, harassed the craftsmen and traders. Heavy extractions kept the Brahmanas in luxury, enriched the temples under their management, and kings themselves consumed the rest. Public interests were neglected, and public works became palace works. For the impoverishment of the people, the Mohammedan autocrats, and the British bureaucrats are invariably blamed, but they appear to have only followed the custom of the country, though with greater intensity in some cases.

Brahmanism prospered in the courts of kings.

The royal kitchen was run by the Brahmanas; even from his own kitchen, the king was to eat only after the Brahmana cooks were sumptuously fed. The temples were converted into Brahmana feeding houses, where the Brahmanas were provided with food every day of the year. Free food and 'dakshina' (largesse) kept the Brahmana community prosperous. The Brahmanas as a class ceased to be priests of the people. They occupied almost all lucrative positions, and they lived on the fat of the land. The non-Brahmanas were debarred from high positions, unless the adopted Brahmana ways, and paid homage to the Brahmanas. The Brahmanised non-Brahmanas received preferential treatment, while those who held fast to their old traditions became the dregs of the society.

Caste was no disqualification before the days of Brahmanisation. Caste was then a privilege and security. The Brahmanas were not entirely responsible for the turn taken by caste, the non-Brahmanas were equally responsible for its growth and maintenance. The caste became a monster with a thousand eyes and a thousand arms. The Brahmanas themselves became more afraid of the monster than the non-Brahmanas. The intensity of fear one entertains is proportional to the degree of ancestor worship he adheres to. Fear for the ancestors made one a slave to family traditions and a dupe to caste restrictions.

To set aside the caste restrictions, the depressed classes are as unwilling as the higher castes, since no lower caste man is willing to give equality to

rights. They are the producers, as Sudras had been in all ages. They are the technicians, they are the manufacturers, and they are the experts in every trade. If they will not forget the past, they will yet be rulers in the land. America or England is not the creation of Popes or Prelates. On the other hand, if the Sudra aim is only to become 'twice-borns', they may become even more 'depressed or suppressed' with the possibility of jeopardising the future of India, this ancient land, where the human mind had in the words of Max Muller "developed some of its choicest gifts."

APPENDIX A

AV : XIX. 6. Purusha & His Sacrifice *By* NARAYANA	RV : X. 90. Purusha *By* NARAYANA
1. Thousand armed in Purusha, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed; he covering the earth entirely, exceeded it by ten fingers' breadth.	1. Thousand heads hath Purusha, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet, on every side pervading earth he fills a space ten fingers wide.
2. With three feet he ascended the sky; a foot of him, again, was here; So he strode out asunder, after eating and non-eating.	4. With three-fourths Purusha went up; one-fourth of him again was here. Thence strode out to every side over what eats not and what eats.
3. So many are his greatnesses; Purusha is superior to that; a foot of him is all beings (bhutal); three feet of him are immortal in the sky.	3. So mighty his greatness; ye greater than thee Purusha. All creatures are one-fourth of him, three fourths eternal life in heaven.
4. Purusha is just this all, what is, what is to be; also (is he) lord of immortality, which was together with another.	2. This Purusha is all that yet hath been and all that is to be; The Lord of Immortality which waxes greater still by food.
5. When they separated Purushas, in how many parts did they distribute him? What was his face? What his arms? What are called his thighs (and) feet?	11. When they divided Purusha how many portions did they make? What do they call his month, his arms? What do they call his thigh and feet?

AV: XIX. 6.	RV: X. 90
6. The Brahmana was his face; the Rajanya became his arms; the Vaisya his middle; from his feet was born the Sudra.	12. The Brahman was his mouth, of both his arm was the Rajanya made. His thighs became the Vaisya, from his feet the Sudra was produced.
7. The moon born from his mind; from his eyes the Sun was born; from his mouth Indra and Agni; from his breath Vayu was born.	13. The moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the Sun had birth; Indra & Agni from his mouth were born; and Vayu from his breath
8. From his naval was the atmosphere; from his head the sky came into being (sam-vrt); from his feet the earth, the quarters from his ear; so shaped the worlds.	14. Forth from his naval came mid-air; the sky was fashioned from his head; Earth from his feet, and from his ear the regions. Thus they formed the world.
9. Viraj is the beginning came into being; Out of Viraj Purusha; it, when born, exceeded the earth behind and also in front.	5. From him Viraj was born, again from Purusha Viraj was born. As soon as he was born he spread eastward and westward over the earth.
10. When with Purusha as oblation, the gods extended the sacrifice, spring was its sacrificial butter, summer its fuel, autumn its oblation.	6. When the gods prepared the sacrifice, with Purusha as their offering. Its oil was spring, the holy gift was autumn, summer was the wood.
11. They sprinkled with the early rain that sacrifice, Purusha, born in the beginning; therewith the gods sacrified the perfectables (Sadhya) and they that are Vasus	7. They balmed as victim on the grass, Purusha born in earliest time, with him the deities and all Sadhyas and Rishis sacrificed.

AV: XIX. 6	RV: X. 90.
12. From that were born horses, and whatever (animals) have teeth in both jaws; kine were born from that, from that, (are) born goats and sheep.	10. From it were horses born, from it all cattle with two rows of teeth; from it were generated kine, from it the goats and sheep were born.
13. From that all sacrificing sacrifice was born the Verses (rc), the chants (Samas); meter were born from that; sacrificial formulas was born from that.	9. From that great general sacrifice Richas and Samas hymns were born; therefrom were spells and charms produced; the Yajur had its birth from it.
14. From that all-sacrificing sacrifice was collected the speckled butter (prasadajya); it made those cattle belonging to Vayu—those that are of the forest and of the village.	8. From the great general sacrifice the dripping fat was gathered up. He formed the creatures of the air, and animals both wild and tame.
15. Seven were made its enclosing sticks, thrice seven its pieces of fuel, when the gods, extending the sacrifice bound Purusha as a victim.	15. Seven fencing sticks had he, thrice seven layers of the fuel were prepared. When the gods offering sacrifice bound as their victim, Purusha.
16. Seven times seventy rays (ancu) were born from the head of the great god, of king Soma, when born out of Purusha.	16. Gods, sacrificing sacrificed the victim: these were the earliest Ordinances. The mightly ones attained the height of heaven, there where the Sidhyas, Gods of old, are dwelling.

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